

Theology vol 60.
EVANGELICAL
TRUTHS
VINDICATED:

IN

AN EPISTLE to the READERS of
Mr. JOHN BRINE's two Pamphlets;

The one entitled,
*Motives to Love and Unity among Calvinists differing in
Opinions.*

The other entitled,
*Some Mistakes in a Book of Mr. Johnson's of Liverpool,
intituled The Faith of God's Elect, &c. noted and
rectified.*

Wherein are demonstrated,

- I. *The Freeness and Sovereignty of Grace*, to be above all Influence, incapable of being purchased by any Price, or of being promoted or impeded by Sin.
- II. *The precious Faith of the Saints*, to be a Participation of the divine Nature, superior to the Nature or to the Work of any Creature.
- III. *The Preaching of the Gospel*, to be a Message of pure Grace; in subserviency whereunto the Law is to be opened in it's clearest Light, but the Gospel alone to be preached.

By JOHN JOHNSON.

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EVANGELICAL

T. R. U. T. H. S.

VINDICATED

Mr. John Brown's two pamphlets;



W. JOHN J. H. S.

NEW YORK

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T H E INTRODUCTION.

Candid READERS,

I DO not expect the Subject under Consideration to attract the Attention of every common Reader; only of serious Enquirers after the Truth, *as it is in Jesus*. I therefore address you as *Brethren in Christ*; to whose impartial Judgment I appeal, in those Things which I here lay before you, desiring you will do yourselves the Justice, by the *Oracles of God*, to examine both Sides, and judge of the *Mistakes*.

In the Word of God I am commanded, *earnestly to contend for the Faith*, or Doctrine of Christ, *which was once delivered unto the Saints*: And some Branches of this Faith, which I find delivered in the Gospel, and have openly espoused, being attacked as *Mistakes*; I think myself in Duty called to defend them, by that Word from whence I received them. The Case is as follows.

A Pamphlet being published, called *The Question answered, Whether saving Faith in Christ is a Duty required by the moral Law, of all those who live under the Gospel Revelation?* This Performance was so inaccurate and indigested, that some Persons thought it could not answer any End, but to amuse and

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perplex weak Minds: Therefore it was the Request of a Number of my Friends, that I would undertake to examine it, and endeavour to explain those Points which the Author had darkened: And with this Request I complied; which being no Secret, the Design became known in *London*; which after Mr. *Brine* understood (as I was informed by a Person who was privy to the Affair) he began to write a Piece upon the same Subject; and by the Time that mine was ready for the Press, his was ready to publish (as it were by way of Prevention) intitled, *Motives to Love and Unity among Calvinists, &c. A Dialogue between Christophilus, Philalethes, and Philagathus*. Wherein the Person called *Philalethes* is represented as taking up the above-mentioned *Pamphlet*, and returning an *Answer* to it. This Dialogue, at it's first coming out, had the designed Effect. For some of my Friends, who (before) had desired the Publication of mine, upon hearing of this, advised me to decline it; for which they gave these two Reasons: 1. They were informed that Mr. *Brine* had published an Answer to the same Pamphlet, which they supposed might be sufficient. 2. For me to publish now, might be ungrateful to Mr. *Brine*; as he might think it a Slight upon his Performance. Whereupon I laid my Manuscript aside, until I was again solicited to publish it by some of my Friends, who having perused Mr. *Brine's* Piece, did not find it to their Satisfaction; forasmuch as *Philalethes*, by whom they understood themselves to be personated, was not clearly represented in that Dialogue; concerning whom I shall take Liberty to note a few Things.

1. He seems to stand equally charged with *Christophilus*, for cherishing *Wrath* against his Brother, on account of differing Sentiments.† In this Point I am certain he is not equally criminal: I am far from

† Pag. 60.

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pleading for *Philaethes*, as a perfect Man: I am convinced he has often been unwary; not so much in representing the Truths of the Gospel in a Manner not intelligible to common Capacities, but in not being more strictly upon his Watch against designing Persons, who were laying wait to catch, to animadvert upon, and cast an Odium upon his Words; though the Words were *sound Speech that cannot be condemned*, and sufficiently explained to unprejudiced Persons. Again, he has been too impatient of those Reproaches, which for the Sake of the Purity of the Gospel, he has been obliged to suffer from his Brethren: For when they have maliciously wrested his Words, putting them in a false Light, he has called it *vile Treatment, false Accusations, base Calumny, &c.* which Expressions, though strictly true, had been better spared. But to accuse, reproach, or cherish Wrath or Animosity against his Brethren, meerly because they entertain Sentiments differing from himself, is what his own Experience forbids; for he well remembers the Time when himself retained the same low Conceptions which he now observes in his Brethren; which prevents him from entertaining the same Censoriousness against *Christophilus*, as *Christophilus* doth against him.—Yet this may occasion another Inconvenience; for he being now sensible what Loss he sustained through those contracted Sentiments, and how his Soul is now enriched by those more enlarged Ideas, which he enjoys through a more intimate Acquaintance with the sacred Oracles; it may make him over-anxious for his Brethren, that they might view the glorious Riches of Gospel Grace in the same Clearness of Light: But while their Minds are strongly prepossessed in favour of their own Sentiments; imagining that for any one to pretend to see Things in a clearer Light than they do, must be Delusion;

it creates Animosity in their Breasts, and causes them to load him with disrespectful Characters.

2. He is represented complaining of the most wretched senseless Stuff, whereby the precious Truth of Grace is condemned as giving Countenance to the vilest Heresies upon Earth, and subverting the whole Gospel of Christ; and yet, immediately desiring *Philagathus* to offer something to heal the Breach, and be a lasting Foundation of mutual Friendship. ||—I am persuaded, *Philaethes* is as sincerely inclined to true Peace as either of the other Persons; but I cannot believe that he is sunk into such Supineness, to desire Peace and Unity without a Foundation of Truth and Righteousness; which cannot be while the one Party is, with Impertinence and Extravagance, reproaching and calumnizing the Doctrines of Jesus: And as mutual Friendship with a Person of such a Disposition could not produce spiritual Edification, I cannot think him so mean-spirited, to desire such a Friendship without a Prospect of mutual Advantage, meerly for the Sake of being applauded for his pacific Temper; nor can I believe him to be so weak-headed, to expect to find *Cbristophilus*, or his Friend whom he was answering, to answer the Character of *faithful Brethren*, while they do not recant those exorbitant Invectives. I know it is commonly objected, ‘That the Thing in Debate is not any of the precious Doctrines of Jesus; and that what we plead for is only a Negative.’ I answer, We deny a false Proposition, and prove it false, by advancing a precious Truth of Christ in direct Opposition thereto, viz. *That the Faith of God’s Elect, is nothing less than the real spiritual Enjoyment of God; or God himself blessing the Soul with the Riches of his own Grace*: And so long as we retain a just Conception of this heavenly Blessing, or divine Communication, it is impossible we should form so low an Idea concern-

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ing it, as to imagine it to be of a Nature capable of being required by any Law, or performed by any Creature that ever had or ever can have a Being.

3. He is represented as assenting to, or acquiescing with *Philagathus*, in stating Election as a Body without a Head. His Words are, "God chose a certain Number of Men to Salvation."* I do not say the Word is not strictly true; but it is a very deficient Relation of the Thing, and what I have often heard *Philaethes* complain of, as conveying a very mean and unfavoury Idea of that eternal glorious Act of God; to speak of a Number of Creatures chosen, without immediate Regard to the first Elect of God, his only begotten Son, his chief Delight, in whom all the Body of select Members are chosen. He is not a Criticizer upon Words, for the sake of Words; neither is he captious, to make a Man an Offender for a Word; but he is cautious to guard against such Ideas, as he apprehends may tend to disparage the precious Truths of the Gospel to Unbelievers, or make them appear raw and insipid in the Eyes of the Children of God: For he knows the spiritual Comfort of a Believer will be more flat or more vivid, according as he hath duller or clearer Apprehensions of the Riches of Grace. Therefore, had he been indulged with full Liberty in such deliberate Conversation, I cannot think he would have passed it, without observing the Deficiency to *Philagathus*: But I am glad to find, afterwards, *Philaethes*, *Zanchy*, and *Dr. Goodwin*, all agreeing to express this glorious Truth in a clear Light.†

4. He is represented acknowledging his Sentiments to be as given by *Christophilus*; "That God—
"decreed to permit the Fall, with a View to il-
"lustrate the Glory of his free Grace and Mercy
"in the Salvation of the Elect, thro' the Mediation
"of Christ."† If I am not much mistaken in my

* Page 3.

† Pages 7, 8.

† Page 6.

Friend *Philaethes*, such a Form of Speech is not correspondent with his professed Judgment: For he declares himself a Scripturist; that whatever Esteem he has for those worthy Servants of Christ, whom the Lord has made Instruments to instruct him in the Search of the Holy Scriptures, he refuses to receive an Article of Faith from Men or Angels, any further than it may be supported by the Oracles of God. Therefore, as nothing can be found in the sacred Word, from whence to take up that Phrase, *Decreed to permit the Fall*; I cannot think, when he was charged with such a Tenet, that without further Explanation he would have said, *This is the Fact*.—Again, He protests against all Ambiguity, or doubtful Expressions; and maintains, that the whole Gospel Revelation is an open Manifestation of Facts capable of the strongest Demonstration, and that nothing of an occult or unintelligible Nature is contained therein: For tho' there be many Things revealed, passing all the Knowledge of Men and Angels; yet, that they are Realities, is infallibly demonstrated: Therefore all manner of Ambiguity in evangelical Things, ought strictly to be avoided. But if I have any Understanding in this Case, *A Decree to permit* is an ambiguous Phrase. For if we mean no more than this, That it was the good Pleasure of God to try Mankind, or to let him have the Trial of himself, by giving him a free Choice, and leaving him to the Freedom of his own Will; then God permitted the Fall: But the Word *Decree* is unnaturally connected with it, and can answer no End but to perplex the Sense. And if the Design be, That God by an absolute Appointment made the Fall unavoidable; then God decreed the Fall: But the Word *Permit* is unnecessarily introduced, and can answer no End but to impose upon the Unwary.—Further, he is represented as a Supralapsarian, professing

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feeling to believe, that God chose his People in Christ, considered in the pure Mass, above the Consideration of the Fall; and yet subjoining this *Decree to permit the Fall*, as necessary thereto, or inseparable therefrom: Which appears like a Contradiction; for if it was *above* the Consideration of the Fall, it could not be *in* the Consideration of the Fall; unless the glorious System of Grace, fixed in the Counsel of God, above the Consideration of the Fall, proved insufficient to support itself, without Assistance from the Fall. But if it be his Judgment, That the Fall was a necessary Concomitant of Election, I should think he might with more Propriety be called an In-lapsarian; (pardon the Term, if it be new) for I know not what else to call him, if he apprehends such a Connexion between the Will of God and the Fall of Man, that the one could not subsist independent of the other. But I cannot believe that these are the Sentiments of *Philaletbes*.

5. He is represented assenting (or not objecting) to *Philagathus*, saying, "The Difference of stating this Doctrine, as above the Consideration of the Fall, or under it, is only *in apice logico*." || Whereas he must know, it is more than a mere logical Point: For he cannot but remember, That while himself viewed the Counsels of Grace, as under the Fall, his Mind was very much contracted and perplexed with many Things, which (in the Calvinistical Scheme) he could not account for, but was obliged to resolve them into—*He knew not what*. For according to that Conception, Christ had not had the Pre-eminence to be set up prior to all the Works of God, and all Things to be made for him, and his Church to be given him out of his Father's own Bosom, of the pure Will of God alone: For then the People had been first, and Christ had been afterwards raised up in Subserviency to their Felicity; not as the Pro-

duction of God's original Counsel, but as a Supply introduced thro' Necessity, to heal a Breach, or support a sinking Structure. And thus God's Holy One, and all the Grace and Glory that shines in him superior to all the Creation, and in Subserviency whereunto all Things in Heaven and Earth received their Being, is represented as an Invention, introduced subsequent to the Creation, yea, subsequent to Sin and Misery: For if the Counsel of God respecting the Choice and Adoption of his People in Christ, was under the Consideration of the Fall, it must needs be under the Consideration of their Creation. So then, That Kingdom of eternal Glory which the Elect shall enjoy in Christ, which is no other Thing but the Enjoyment of Christ himself, is only an accidental Thing, as they were not originally designed for it in their Creation: And if so, God in his first View of Mankind, must behold them all standing in an equal Relation to himself, before he beheld any of them in the peculiar Relation of Children; and those that are now his Elect, were then no more his Elect than the Rest: He must have beheld them out of Christ before he beheld them in Christ; beheld them as Objects of his Wrath, before he beheld them as Object of his Delight. This undigested Scheme is perplexed with as great Absurdities as the Opinion of the *Arminians*: That makes the divine Will to be determined according to the good or evil Dispositions of the Creature: This represents his Counsels of Grace as occasioned by Sin and Misery. And they both come to one in this, That the Purposes of Jehovah, relative to the eternal Glorification of Emmanuel and his Bride, do not proceed entirely from his own Will, exclusive of any Motive from without himself, or from the Creature. But if the Fall was prior to the Grace of Adoption, the giving of Christ and his Church to each other, and the Settlement of eternal Glory upon the elect Head and Members, as
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one perfect Body in the Father's immutable Counsel; how came this Grace into Existence? This supposes it to have some Kind of Beginning, and whatever had a Beginning, might possibly have an End. And if any Thing whatsoever was prior to Christ Jesus, in the Father's Counsel, then he is not *the same Yesterday, and to Day, and for ever*: For then a Change must have passed upon the Will of the Father, the Station of the Son, and the Residence of the Holy Ghost, inasmuch as something new is supposed to rise up in the Divine Mind, and a new Relation to subsist between the eternal Jehovah and the Heirs of Glory, which strikes a more absurd Figure than the *Arminian* Scheme; for the *Arminian* does not represent the Most High as taking new Resolutions and Purposes, but as having one unalterable Purpose to conduct himself by certain Rules towards all his Creatures, so as their eternal Happiness or Misery may be determined, according to their virtuous or vicious Dispositions; which Mistake arises thro' Want of due Attention to the Difference between the Covenant of Works, in which all Mankind are consider'd as Servants, under which the Non-Elect eternally remain, and the Covenant of Grace, in which the Elect are consider'd as Sons, Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ. For the Tenor of the first Covenant is, *The Man which doth those Things, shall live by them*: But the second runs thus, *I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a People*. And by keeping the former in their Eye, without attending to the Greatness of the Glory, as it shines in the latter, they lose the Excellency of sovereign Grace, and confound the Dispensations of God towards his Sons, with his Dispensations towards his Servants. But they do not represent God so immediately changing in himself, or new Counsels introduced in his own Mind.

But now *Philaethes* views Things in a more clear, distinct, scriptural Light. That Christ *was set up*
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from everlasting; because he was the Father's Delight. That his People were chosen in him, and given to him, because the Father loved them with the same Love: Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. That according to his eternal Counsel, to glorify his Son, and his Church together; therefore he created them: *This People have I formed for myself.* That for the Sake of his Church, all other Beings in Heaven and Earth were created: *For all Things are yours.—All Things are for your Sakes.* That all the Rest of the Creation (tho' never intended to participate in the same Glory as the adopted Sons) were made perfect Creatures, fixed in Stations compleatly happy, capable of continuing so for ever; and, that any of them became otherwise is alone through Sin: *The Angels which kept not their first Estate, but left their own Habitation.—God hath made Man upright; but they have sought out many Inventions.* And notwithstanding, by Sin God's Elect were sunk as low as any Part of the Creation, and became obnoxious to the highest Condemnation; yet in the more early Counsel of God, the unchanging Love of the Father, the indissoluble Relation between Christ and his Chosen, and the Treasures of inexhaustible Grace already given them in Christ, and secured for them in his infallible Hands, these Heirs of God are amply provided against all Events. The eternal I AM is their Portion, sufficient to answer every Circumstance that is possible to them: *For it pleased the Father, that in him should all Fulness dwell.* Therefore, neither Sin, Wrath, Death, nor Hell can possibly hinder the original grand Design, nor prevent their Enjoyment of God in eternal Glory.

And in this View of Things he must know how much his Soul has been enlarged, established, and comforted; drawn forth in Love to God, and melted in Humility: What a bright Consistency he now beholds thro' the whole System of Grace, and with what

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Composure and Serenity of Mind he now contemplates thereon, compared with what he ever enjoyed while he conceived of the Counsels of Grace as introduced under the Consideration of the Fall! So that whatever Regard he may have to his Brethren who differ from him in this Point, it can never appear to himself as a Matter of meer Speculation. Tho' I doubt not but it may be in this Case as it frequently is in others: When Persons have embraced a certain Opinion, they are frequently unwilling quite to give up the Point, tho' in the Substance of the Thing their Minds are convinced: So some Persons having imbibed a Notion, That in the Counsel of Election God first beheld the Objects in their Sin and Misery, when they come to be further illuminated, they cannot chearfully give it up, but refine upon it, until it may be, the remaining Difference is little more than a logical Point: But the Difference between the two Doctrines is not so.

6. He is supposed to acquiesce in the Sentiments of *Christophilus*, thus represented, "He believes Election to be an Act of sovereign Mercy in God."* But I am certain he does not believe this: For if God's Elect were chosen in the *pure Mass*, without any View to Sin, it must be without any View to Misery; and where Misery is not (in Fact, in Merit, or in Apprehension,) Mercy cannot exist; wherefore, that Mercy had any Place in the original Design of Election and Adoption, is foreign to his Sentiments. But if we speak of the boundless Grace of God flowing thro' Christ, and secured to his Church according to Election, it includes Mercy, and every other Blessing that can possibly become needful for them, or that can possibly contribute to their Felicity, or the glorifying of God in them, in Time and Eternity. And this, without any Change in the Thing, or any Thing brought into Existence

* Page 55,

which was not from everlasting: For every heavenly Blessing that the Saints enjoy, and in whatever Variety Blessings are given to them, they are nothing else but the Love of God, in its various Modifications, or different Ways of Communication. And this Love is nothing else but God himself: *God is Love*; which being an eternal, infinite, unchanging Ocean, it necessary fills up every Space to the beloved Objects. Therefore, whatever Vacancy can happen to God's Elect, there is an immediate Supply of Grace flowing from this immense Ocean of Love, compleatly answering every Deficiency. And according to the Nature of the Want, the Grace appears in such a particular Mode. And thus it becomes, Mercy to the Miserable, Pardon to Offenders, Peace to Enemies, Redemption to Slaves, Life to the Dead, Wisdom to the Blind, Righteousness to the Unrighteous, Sanctification to the Unholy, Hope to the Languishing, Strength to the Fainting, Riches to the Poor, Salvation to the Perishing, &c. And yet here is nothing new, but that same Love which is eternal in God himself, going forth in these different Modes to supply every Want, and remove every Evil which can possibly befall his adopted Children; for tho' his Love could not assume these different Forms until the Circumstances of the People made it requisite, it is the very same Love, and to the same Objects. And to appear in every particular Mode which their Case can require, is essential to the Being of this Love, as it is essential to a boundless Ocean to fill every opening Cavity: And according to the Measure and Form of that Cavity, such will be the Supply, without any Change at all in the Ocean. Thus, Jesus Christ is the unchanging Rock of Ages, yet he *of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption*. And if the Grace, thro' which we are chosen to Sonship, and eternal Glory, had not contained

contained an ample Provision against every intervening Obstacle, that was possible to oppose, or Attempt to prevent the Consummation thereof, the Counsel of Election had not been complete: So that we are chosen to Salvation, and chosen to be Vessels of Mercy, as Mercy is a Fruit of electing Love, but Election is not a Fruit or Act of Mercy.

7. He is represented, strenuously arguing the Impossibility of unregenerate Men seeking or desiring spiritual Blessings, and concluding his Argument with these Words; “Therefore, no unsanctified Heart will ever pray to God for Grace and Holiness. This is Men’s dreadful Sin, and it justly exposes them unto direful Vengeance.” † Grace and Holiness is that divine Life which dwells in Jesus, and is communicated by the Holy Ghost, which it is impossible for any Creature to see, desire, or pray for, without Faith: *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?* And he says, “Faith in Christ for Salvation—is not required by the Covenant of Works; and therefore the Want thereof brings not Men under it’s Curse.” † I therefore ask, How then can the Want of that Prayer, which proceeds alone from this Faith, expose Men to direful Vengeance? Prayer is the Breathing of the Soul to God under the Influence of such Principles as the Creature is possessed of: But Mr. *Brine* tells me, “Faith—as it is a Principle, no *Calvinist* asserts that it is the Duty of Men to acquire it.” * How then can it be the Sin of those who are destitute of that Principle, that their Hearts do not pray those Prayers which are impossible without it? All Prayer proceeds from that Life which the Soul lives, whether of Nature or of Grace. The Difference of which two Lives is justly expressed by Dr. *Owen*, as quoted by *Philaethes*: “The Principle of this Life was wholly and entirely in Man himself.—But in the Life whereunto we are

† Pages 36, 37. † Page 32. * *Mistakes*, Page 34.

“renewed

“ renewed by Jesus Christ, the Fountain and Principle of it is not in ourselves, but in him.” || Now I would ask, Is it because the unsanctified Heart does not pray to God from a spiritual Principle, which he never had, or because he does not pray for spiritual Grace and Holiness, from that natural Principle which he has; that is the Sin which exposes to Vengeance? All Sin is the Transgression of the Law, under some Consideration. The Law pronounces Vengeance, only consider’d as a Covenant of Works. The Covenant of Works has no Demand upon any Creature, beyond the Extent of that holy Principle first planted in Nature, and of which he was possessed when he stood perfect in that Covenant. And that Principle of pure Nature which properly subsisted in Man himself, being complete in it’s own Essence, could no more desire the Grace and Holiness of that Life whose Fountain and Principle is in Christ, while in it’s original State, than it can in it’s lapsed State. Then it was full, and could not possibly receive; now it is Enmity, and cannot possibly love. Therefore, Man never was nor ever can be in any State, wherein it is possible for him to understand, to love, desire, or pray for evangelical Grace and Holiness; or to come within the Compass of Duty in seeking it, or Sin in neglecting it; until he be blessed with that Life which is in the Son of God. But, that unsanctified Hearts despise or neglect the Gospel, and those Means of knowing and doing the Will of God, which Nature is capable of understanding, and attending to; this is their dreadful Sin, and exposes them to direful Vengeance.

8. He is represented, speaking of the Believer’s *Acts*, and *Actings* of Faith. In which Expressions if no more is intended, than those internal and external Acts, of drawing nigh to, and glorifying God, which proceed from the Efficacy of Faith in

the Heart, and from thence may be denominated Acts of Faith; then the Thing is easy to be understood, and corresponds with the Experience of every Believer: But if they intend, that special Faith is the Act of, or to be acted by the Creature; then his Words are unintelligible; unless that heavenly Grace be something of an inferior Nature, to what it is described in the Word of God; where Faith is ascribed to the Power of God, and both the spiritual Blessings and spiritual Actings of the Saints, are ascribed to the Power of Faith. When speaking of *special Faith*, he says, “The moral Law—requires it, considered “as a Law meerly, or Rule of Action.”* If the Meaning be, that where God hath blessed a Soul with special Faith, that Soul is laid under more abundant Obligations to Love, Gratitude, and Obedience; and the holy Law requires a Manifestation of that Faith, in all spiritual Walking, and Holiness of Conversation; or according to his own Description of the moral Law; “God’s Will, that his Creature, Man, should yield Obedience unto him in “every State, suitable to those Principles wherewith “he furnishes him, and unto those Discoveries of “himself which he graciously affords him:”† In this Light, it is an eternal undeniable Truth. But if he means, That special Faith itself is required by the Law; it cannot be true: For Faith is given unto, but not required from the Creature. And if a faithful Improvement be what he intends, his Words are very ambiguous, or improper: For the Blessing, and the Improvement of it, are not identically the same Thing. Again, he says, “It is “granted, that God requires regenerate Persons to “act Faith on Christ for Salvation; none deny it.”‡ If these Words intend no more than, That God requires every regenerate Soul to shew the Fruit of Faith, in a diligent Adherence to all the precious

* Page 43.

† Page 41.

‡ Page 44.

Truths of the Gospel, a close Search of the Scriptures, and a constant Waiting upon God in all the Means which he hath appointed; that his Understanding may be enlarged, his Mind made spiritual, his Heart established in Faith and Love, and that he may walk in all holy Conversation and Godliness: This, no gracious Soul will deny. But if he means, That God requires the Person to do or perform Faith, in a proper Sense; he must know there be many who deny it.—And I cannot believe that *Philaethes* would have left his Expressions so incoherent, had he had full Licence to explain his own Sentiments.

Thus, Brethren, when I saw that my Friend *Philaethes* did not appear in so genuine a Light as I expected; the above-mentioned Manuscript, which for some Months had been laid aside, I published, with this Title, *The Faith of God's Elect; or, the Life of Jesus manifest in his Saints*. Whereupon, Mr. Brine hath published another Piece, intitled, *Some Mistakes in a Book of Mr. Johnson's of Liverpool, intitled, The Faith of God's Elect, &c. noted and rectified*. Which is the Occasion of my present Address to you; that you may seriously examine what is advanced on each Part, and judge for yourselves.

In the Book I published, tho' the Author whose Work I examined, was to me an entire Stranger; yet, to avoid exposing the Person any further than he had exposed himself, I carefully declined the mentioning of his Name through the whole Piece. But Mr. Brine has been as careful to inform the World, in whose Performanee he has found the Mistakes; by exposing, over and again, my Name and Place of Abode in the publick Papers. Whereby, both himself, and me, and the Subject of our Debate, have been exposed to the Ridicule of Persons, who will never give themselves any Concern to know where the Mistakes lie. But I suppose it was his

Wisdom

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Wisdom to take this Method: For tho' I am not very popular, or my Name much known; yet, in some Places where it is known I have been represented in a Light so unaccountable, that many Persons would be glad to hear of something to mortify *John Johnson* of *Liverpool*: Wherefore I make no Doubt but that he hath had more Orders for his Pamphlets, than what he would have had if all the Mistakes had been advertised, and the Name concealed.

In his Introduction he suggests a Suspicion lest I should not have Temper enough to bear with his Freedom, without some undue Resentment. What he may call *due*, or *undue* Resentment, I know not; but shall leave it to my Brethren to judge, whether I exceed the Bounds of Moderation, or Christian Temper. I can read his Performance without Anger, but not without some Degree of Disapprobation; for I have the same Opinion of his Mistakes, as he has of mine, *That they are owing to a partial Examination of the Matter under Consideration*. He proposes to have such a *Guard* upon himself, as not to give Occasion for a just Censure of *Unfairness* or *Disingenuity*: I also propose to myself the same *Guardedness*, in the Defence I make. But how far his Performance coincides with his Proposal; and how far my Performance may answer to my Proposal, herein, is submitted to your Determination.

In my Book are some Escapes of the Press, which are not noted by *Errata*, but left to the Reader's Candor; some of which have fallen under his Notice and Correction: And in one Quotation from mine, he has curiously corrected my Grammar, but not his own Printer, who by altering my Word lost the Sense, putting *reduce* instead of *seducer*. * But Mistakes of this kind are Matters of small Importance, as they do not affect the Subject of our En-

* *Mistakes*, Page 47.

quiries. But where the precious Truths of the Gospel, founded upon the Oracles of God, are treated as enormous Mistakes; I think it my Duty to state them in as distinct a Light as I can, and leave them to your Decision, whether they be the Teachings of the sacred Word, or the Productions of a wanton Imagination.

In my Book he points out eight Particulars, which he notes as my Mistakes. Which, before I attempt to vindicate, I shall put down in his own Words, (*marked with reversed Comma's;*) together with those Passages in my Book, from whence he gathers them (*in Italic Characters;*) and leave my Brethren to judge of them by the Light of the infallible Word.

I. “ That Grace and Glory might have taken Place upon God’s Elect, on the Ground of Adoption, without the Intervention of Sin, and Salvation from it.” *I cannot conceive any Reason, according to the original Constitution of Things, why Grace and Glory might not have taken Place upon God’s Elect, according to his everlasting Love in Adoption, supposing Sin, or Salvation, had never had a Being. For Sin, in its own Nature, cannot possibly be of any Use to any Being. It is what God hates: And it is what makes every Creature miserable, where it takes Place. And Sin alone made Salvation needful; without which no Salvation could have been.*—Let my Brethren please to examine the whole of what I said upon that Subject, wherein the above Sentences were introduced; and judge deliberately, Whether I dispute about Grace and Glory, whereof the evangelical Revelation makes no Discovery, nor had the least Place in the divine Counsels? Or if I have fallen into a Mistake as great as possible, or as can be imagined? Or if I have opposed a Truth so plain, that the Reader’s Understanding is in Danger to be affronted by an Attempt to convince me?

II. “ That

II. "That *Adam* was called earthy, in respect to " his Mind, as well as his Body; or, that the Apostle calls him earthy, in relation to his Person " and Nature."—*But this Holiness wrought in Creation, subsisted in the earthy Man; and could only be such a Resemblance of, and Nearness to God, as an earthy Nature was capable of.*—Please to read and consider my whole Argument respecting the Difference between the Holiness created in *Adam's* Nature, and the Holiness communicated to the Saints in Christ; and judge how far I have mistaken the Scope of the Apostle's Reasoning, in the Place referred unto: And whether I have suggested any Thing which hath the least Tendency to lessen our primitive Perfection; or any Thing to give Advantage to the *wretched Abominations* of that sort of Men, who depreciate the original Purity of the Creation, on purpose to degrade the Creator, or to detract from the infinite Holiness of the Person of Christ, during the Time he was clothed in mortal Flesh?

III. "That Grace in the Hearts of the Saints is " not a new Creature."—*If the Principle wrought, did subsist in the Man's self, without immediate Communication from God; it would be the proper Work of the Man to actuate that Principle: And then the drawing and receiving of Grace from Christ, would depend upon the Application of the Creature; or rather upon the Concurrence of two Creatures: For that imaginary Principle itself must be a distinct Creature. And I know this is the way that some Persons speak, of a new Creature in the Man; instead of speaking in the Scripture Stile, If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature. But if this imaginary Creature be not perfect, it is not the Work of God; and if it be perfect, the Man must have Perfection in himself; and can neither seek, draw, nor receive Grace from Christ: For that which is perfect is full, and that which is full can hold no more. But the Faith of God's Elect is not a Creature or Principle separately*

ately subsisting; or a meer Operation upon the Man: But it is divine Life kindled in the Soul, by the powerful Rays of the Sun of Righteousness: Or a heavenly Stream flowing into the Soul, from the Fountain of living Waters; maintained by the constant Communication of Grace, or spiritual Influence, from the Father, thro' the Son, by the Holy Ghost.—That internal Principle of Purity with which Adam was endued, was inherent in his Nature; therefore it fell with him: But the spiritual Grace, or Life of Faith which the Saints enjoy, is not inherent in themselves; but a glorious Ray of divine Life shining into their Hearts, in the Face of Jesus Christ.—Nor can this transcendent glorious Grace come within the Compass of a Duty; but is from first to last altogether perfect, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, heavenly, and divine.—Please to peruse the whole of my Definition of Faith: And when these Passages are deliberately digested, in Connexion with the rest; then judge freely in what an inaccurate, confused, and inconsistent Manner I have written upon it; and how strange, unaccountable, and unguarded my Words are, that he is ashamed to dwell on the Confutation of them.

IV. “That Faith, though it hath Activity, it is “not an Act.”—*I know Faith is an active Principle: But there is a material Difference between its Activeness, and being acted. I am very sensible there is what may be called Acts of Faith; and I very well understand it, when spoken of Faith acting, or producing Acts; but am entirely ignorant, how the Faith of the Operation of God should be acted by a Creature.—The Soul ascends towards Christ; not as its own proper Act, (much less the Soul acting Faith,) as it is not under the Determination of his own Will; but under the powerful Actuation of special Faith, or irresistible Grace, the Mind is excited, sweetly and willingly drawn, or carried as on Eagle's Wings; so as all his internal Powers are elevated, and delightfully exercised upon Christ the Object of his Love, his Life, Joy, and only Rest.—So, believing in, cleaving*

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to, embracing, and resting upon Christ for Life and Salvation, are not the Acts of the Person in a proper Sense; but the immediate Product of that Life of Faith which the Soul enjoys from God.—Now, Brethren, please to weigh these Passages, together with the main Scope of the Argument wherein they were introduced; and see what Room I have given for Diversion, in that I call Faith a Principle, and yet deny that it is inherent in the Saints themselves. Why is not Dr. Owen ridiculed, for saying, *The Fountain and Principle of the Life of Christ, is not in ourselves, but in him?* Or if I was guilty of an Impropriety, in not distinguishing between the Life of Grace being inherent in their Natures, and inherent in their Persons; yet, Have I left my Meaning so undetermined, to give Occasion for that Enquiry, Whether this Principle hath no Subject in which it inheres? or is it in God? or in Christ? &c. Or, “if, in Fact, it is any Thing?” I think I made my Meaning very obvious to the unprejudiced Reader; that I understand, Divine Grace in the Soul, Faith in Christ Jesus, and spiritual Life, in Substance to be all one and the self-same Thing; that it is originally in God himself, and cannot possibly have any Existence, separate from Jehovah; that it is in the Saints, no otherwise than by perpetual Influx from its divine Origin, or Christ himself being their Life: And if it may be said to be inherent in the Saints, it is so in no other Sense, than as God himself is inherent in them: *I will dwell in them.—That Christ may dwell in your Hearts by Faith.—The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.*—Now, What is it in my Words that is so amazingly strange, and not to be reconciled with Truth, Sense, or with myself? Wherein have I represented Faith as a meer Nullity? Do any of my Words suggest, that the Saint does not believe, think holily, or will spiritually; or, that Thinking, Willing, and Nilling are not Acts of the Man? And tho’ I deny

deny divine Operations to be the Actions of the Creature, have I given any Occasion to talk of a *new Soul* in Man? And wherein is it so astonishing, to illustrate spiritual Affections excited in the Mind by the Power of divine Grace, by those involuntary Motions of our Animal Frame excited by the Power of Nature? For the Soul to be actuated by Faith, and to become active in spiritual Things under the Power of that Actuation, I very well understand; but I never pretended to understand any Thing either of *actuating* or *acting* Faith: Then, wherein do I confound them?

V. "That Faith is not, nor can be a Duty."—How *strange* this is, and how *false* and *unaccountable* the Foundation is on which I argue, I shall leave to your Judgment, after you have examined what I said upon the Subject. And since he says, "Mr. *Johnson* argues very impertinently, in observing "that it is not the Duty of Men to beget or produce this holy Principle in themselves. The Author, on whom he animadverts, pleads not for "that."* I intreat your Patience to read over *The Question answered*, &c. and see if you can understand what the Author pleads for; and then judge of my Impertinence.

VI. "That Faith is not purchased by Christ."—*Faith is not capable of being purchased by any Price.—For whatsoever is obtained by Purchase, is procured by the Purchaser, from some Hand distinct from himself. But Faith proceeds from Christ, as its native Original.*—Whether this Reason is of any Weight I leave to your Judgment. I am so far from talking of *the regenerate Principle*, that I do not understand whether such a Phrase has any Meaning. But if some Grace be necessary to the Regeneration of a *Soul*, which is not contained in precious Faith, I leave you to determine what that *Grace* is.

VII. "That Ministers are not commissioned to preach the Law."—*Our Commission is not to preach the Law, but the Gospel.*—Please to examine the whole Passage, and compare it with the Commission given to the Ministers of the Gospel in the New Testament: And judge of my *unskilful* Way of Writing, how *highly prejudicial* to evangelical Truths, or about *I know not what*; and wherein the *Error in Judgment, Want of due Attention, or the Inadvertency* appear; or, what Reason I have given for Sorrow to be expressed on this Occasion.

VIII. "That Ministers are not to admonish Sinners to leave their Sins, and amend their Lives."—*Were we to neglect our proper Work, and spend our Time in admonishing Sinners to reform their Lives, to mend their Ways, to practise Virtue and Religion, to regulate their Conversation, to tread in the Paths of Piety, to spend their Time in serving God, to imitate good People in all their godly Actions, &c. This would not have the least Tendency to convince, but to seduce them; by causing them to imagine their Salvation depended on a moral Reformation: For these Things may be done (in the Sense the World takes them) without a Spark of spiritual Grace. And when Persons hear them insisted on, as the main Branch of the Minister's Work; and when they comply with the Admonitions, and practise the Duties recommended to them, (which is a very easy Thing for a carnal Man to do;) they naturally substitute them in the Room of the Salvation of God. But our Work is to strike at the Root: To open the Purity and Perfection, Extent and Intent, Perpetuity and Severity of God's holy Law; exposing the Corruption of Nature, the Plague of the Heart, and the mortal Infection of Sin, &c.—The Law in its native Obligation made the Instrument of the propitious Government of the Mediator, requires Repentance in all Men every where. For the Goodness of God in his tender Mercy, and kind Benefaction, is a sufficient Inducement to lead thereto; and the Hopes of Judgments*
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being averted, and our Tranquility lengthened, in consequence of a moral Reformation, is sufficient Encouragement therein.—Please to read both these Passages, and observe the main Design of both Arguments, in *The Faith of God's Elect*; and judge how much I palliate the *Corruption* of human Nature, or extenuate the *Viciousness* of Men's Dispositions; and how *loose, unguarded,* and so as not to be *reconciled*, I express myself.

Thus, my Brethen, I refer to your Judgment those Passages in my Book which have given Umbrage, with the Mistakes pointed out therein: Which Eight Mistakes (if such they prove) are but originally Three.—The first relates to the Freeness and Sovereignty of Grace; in Adoption, Election and eternal Union with Christ, &c. And to this belong the first and sixth Mistakes. The second relates to the Life of God in the Soul, called, The Grace of God, precious Faith, &c. And to this belong the second, third, fourth, and fifth Mistakes. The third relates to the preaching of the Gospel: And to this belong the seventh and eighth Mistakes.—Which Doctrines I shall endeavour to state, in as distinct and intelligible a Light as I can; and shall also refer myself to your Judgment therein, whether they be grounded upon the Word of God, or not.

EVANGELICAL

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VINDICATED.

CHAP. I.

Of the Freeness and Sovereignty of Grace.

THE Origin of all Grace is the everlasting God, who is known by his Name JAH, and rideth upon the Heavens in the Excellency of his Majesty; and whom no Creature is able to extol, according to his inconceivable Greatness! Whose Name alone is JEHOVAH, and is the Most High above all the Earth. His Essence and all his Attributes are infinite Perfection. He calls himself I AM; which *is*, and which *was*, and which *is to come*: And tells us, *This is my Name for ever, and this is my Memorial unto all Generations.* He appropriates to himself these Characters ALPHA and OMEGA, the First and the Last. He often avouches his despotick Authority; *I am the LORD:* And commands the whole Creation to stand in Awe

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of his Sovereignty : *Be still, and know that I am GOD.* Nor can the eternal HOLY ONE know any Change, or be what he is not, or cease to be what he is : *According to thy Name, O GOD, so is thy Praise unto the Ends of the Earth.—Behold, Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee.—Blessed be thy glorious Name, which is exalted above all Blessing and Praise.*

Wherefore, as the divine Being in all his Attributes is independent, immutable, and uncontrollable; his unfathomable Love, his unsearchable Wisdom, and his irresistible Power, are infinitely perfect; and his Grace, in it's immense Original, it's glorious Manifestations, and efficacious Communications, is absolutely free, and absolutely sovereign. That Grace which is in God the Father, proceeds forth from him in his beloved Son, and is communicated to his Elect by the Holy Ghost, is infinitely above all created Influence, has no Dependence on any Occurrence that can happen in Time, nor can possibly be affected one Way or other, by any Thing found or not found in, done or not done by any Creature : *He is in one Mind, and who can turn him? And what his Soul desireth, even that he doth.*

From Everlasting to Everlasting he is known by the Name of God ALMIGHTY.—EMMANUEL, the Husband, the Life, and the Fountain of all Grace to his Church, eternally dwells in God : *I am in the Father.* The Union between Christ the Head and the select Members of his Body, is in God : *Your Life is hid with Christ in God.* Election is in God : *Elect according to the Foreknowledge of God the Father.* Adoption is in God : *Having predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself.* The Counsel and Purpose of Grace is in God : *According to his good Pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself.* The Execution of all the divine Counsel is by his own Son, the Wisdom and Power of God : *Who worketh all Things after the Counsel of his own Will.*
And

And all the Blessings of Grace and Glory proceed from God, as a living Stream from an overflowing Fountain: *The LORD will give Grace and Glory.*—Wherefore, upon this Foundation I stand, as an invariable Truth built upon the infallible Word of God; ‘That the Grace of God cannot possibly be ‘excited by any Motive, being in itself absolutely ‘free; nor can it possibly be retarded by any Ob- ‘stacle, being in itself absolutely sovereign.’ And hence I conclude,

1. No Purchase can be made of Faith, or any heavenly Grace. 2. No Necessity can be of Sin, to give an Opportunity to Grace.

1. *Faith is not purchased by Christ.*

It is not consistent with the Nature of Things, that any Thing whatsoever should be purchased from such a Being as God is; who is in himself possessed of all Perfection, has all Fulness to give, but cannot possibly receive: Therefore that Being from whom any Thing can be purchased, is not God. It is not consistent with the Nature of Grace to be purchased; for whatever is purchased is not free, and whatever is not free is not Grace: Therefore if it can be obtained by Purchase it is no more Grace. It is not consistent with the Nature of Faith, that it should be purchased; for Faith is the special *Gift of God*, a *spiritual Blessing* in Christ, a Communication of vital *Grace* flowing from the incomprehensible *Fulness of God*: Therefore whatever is capable of being the Subject of any Purchase, is not the Faith of God’s Elect.

I contend not about Terms and Phrases, or for any strained or doubtful Construction of Words; I take the Word *Purchase* in it’s proper Signification, according to the Sense in which it is used in Scripture. ‘To buy with a Price, or procure a Thing ‘by Agreement, for some Thing in return of equal

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‘ Value ; to procure by Wisdom and Power, or recover a Thing from some Bondage or Incumbrance, ‘ to obtain some Dignity, or gain a Title to some advanced Station by personal Merit.’ In all these Senses Christ purchased the Persons of God’s Elect : But he never purchased divine Blessings for them. To the People it is said, *Ye are bought with a Price : Of the spiritual Blessings it is said, The Grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.—Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable Gift.* The Saints are called, *A peculiar (or purchased) People.—The purchased Possession.* The Blessings of Grace are called, *The Things that are freely given to us of God.* Christ, that he might deliver his Chosen from the Curse of the Law, *gave himself a Ransom for all.—His Life a Ransom for many.* And they are called, *The Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood.—To rescue them from the Tyranny of Satan, Sin, and Death, he displays sovereign Wisdom, Love, and Power : He shall redeem their Soul from Deceit and Violence.—To obtain the supreme Dignity in their Hearts, he manifests to them his own personal Excellencies, his superlative Love to their Persons, his masterly Achievements on their Behalf, and the exceeding Riches of Grace given unto them in his infinite Fulness ; whereby he gains all the Faculties of their Souls into a sweet Subjection to, and Delight in himself : Whom have I in Heaven but thee ? And there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee.* Thus the Son of God has purchased his People, in every Light that they were capable of being purchased. And this is the Song of the Church, *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood.* But I do not remember any Account in the Oracles of God, of any other Purchase that Christ has made. And he did not purchase his Church FROM, but TO God.

If it be objected, ‘ That in the Purchase which ‘ Christ made of his People, he procured for ‘ them

‘ them Remission of Sins, Exemption from Con-
 ‘ demnation, &c.’ I answer, Christ’s purchasing, or
 redeeming his People from all Iniquity, necessarily
 includes their Deliverance from all the Consequences
 of that Iniquity; so that Pardon of Sin, Purification
 of the Conscience, and Freedom from all the Effects
 of the Curse, are inseparably connected therewith,
 or contained therein. And these are Favours, which
 never can be sufficiently admired, nor ever will be
 forgotten by the Ransomed of the Lord. But they
 are Blessings only in a privative Sense, being Acts of
 Indemnity, Immunity, or Restoration, giving Deli-
 verance from Evil; but a Release from Evil is ma-
 terially different to an essential Blessedness, or the
 Enjoyment of a real and substantial Good: *Every*
good Gift, and every perfect Gift is from above, and
cometh down from the Father of Lights; from whom
 nothing ever came by Way of Purchase.—If it should
 be said, ‘ That Christ by his Obedience and Suf-
 ‘ ferings merited, or obtained that Dignity and
 ‘ Glory of which himself is now possessed with his
 ‘ Father:’ To this I answer, Christ, by fulfilling his
 Father’s good Pleasure in Behalf of his Elect, per-
 sonating them in their State of Sin and Misery, doing
 Honour to the holy Law which they had violated,
 and making Satisfaction to divine Justice by his pre-
 cious Blood, he obtained Authority to personate them
 in the Presence of God, as *the LORD our Righteous-*
ness; or to appear in the Presence of God for us, as our
Advocate. And having purchased them from under
 the condemning Sentence, he has a sovereign Right
 to rescue them out of the Hand of every Adversary,
 and save them with an everlasting Salvation: *Because*
he hath poured out his Soul unto Death. But he did
 not merit any personal Glory; for the Glory which he
 possesses, is the very same which he had with the Fa-
 ther, *before the World was*: Nor did he merit for his
 Church any heavenly or spiritual Blessing; for all
 those

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those were Gifts given by the Father, in Christ, to his Chosen, *before the World began.*

We ought to distinguish well between the Merits of Christ, in the Capacity of a Mediator, and his Communications of Grace and Glory, as the vital Head of his Church: In the one Capacity he is to be considered as an omnipotent Agent, *The Author of eternal Salvation*; in the other, as an immense Treasury, or inexhaustible Fountain, *Full of Grace and Truth.* He purchased the Persons of God's Elect, and merited their Freedom from all Condemnation: But special Blessings proceeding from the Fountain of Life, are no where represented as the Productions of Merit, but of unextinguishable Love.—Nor can it consist with the Being of *the Most High God, the Possessor of Heaven and Earth*, to receive any Price, or valuable Consideration for any Good proceeding from himself.—If it be objected, 'That the Purchase is ascribed to Christ, who is Heir of all Things, possessed of all Perfection, equal with God:' I answer, This does not prove it possible, but utterly impossible, that he should purchase any Thing from his Father. For in every Purchase the contracting Parties are considered as twain, possessed of different Properties, which they reciprocally exchange for mutual Advantage, whereby each becomes possessed of a Property which he had not before: So Christ, by his Blood, gave that Honour to the Law which Sinners took away; and in Return, received his Children at full Liberty, which were held lawful Captives. But between the Father and the Son, such an Exchange is impossible, for they are One, and possess every Perfection in common: *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all Things into his Hand.*

It is true, That God in the Character of Lawgiver and Judge, and Christ in the Character of Mediator, are properly twain: But the *Fountain of Blessings*, and the *Administrator of Justice*, are very different Characters;

ractions: Under the former, *The God of all Grace* freely gave to his beloved Son all divine, spiritual, heavenly, and eternal Blessings, for the Accommodation of his Church: Under the latter, *The God of Justice* demanded and took the Life of the Surety for the Sins of his People; and under this Consideration, it was not from God that Christ purchased his Church, but from under the Condemnation of the Law, whereby they were banished from God, and to bring them back from their Exile. And be it observed, that in the Characters of Law-giver and Judge, it is not possible for any possessive Enjoyment, or actual Benefit, to proceed from any Person, either by Purchase or Donation. These Characters relate only to Matters of Equity, in Justice and Truth to determine all Cases of Right and Wrong; therefore in my humble Opinion, it is very inconsistent to talk of ‘A valuable Consideration—for our—eternal Felicity’—‘given into the Hand of God, in the Characters of Law-giver and Judge.’

Grace and Glory are the Productions of divine uninterrupted Love, or they are divine Love itself, in its Out-goings and Communications. Divine Love is God himself; Grace is God opening the Bosom of his Love to us; Glory, is God embracing us in the highest Manifestations of his Love; and our Right of Inheritance is *the good Pleasure of his Will*. Therefore, if the Obedience and Death of Christ did not procure divine Love, it did not obtain for us a legal Right to Grace and Glory.—Since Grace and Glory are no other than God in the Openings of his Bosom, and Manifestations of his immutable Mind, they cannot be purchased unless God himself is purchased: And as they are the very Fulness of Christ, he did not purchase them unless he purchased himself. All Grace and Glory are Christ’s native Right, as he is *Heir of all Things*, and the indisputable Right of all his Elect, as they stand in him
Children

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Children of God, and *joint Heirs with Christ*. And since these unspeakably high, rich, and glorious Blessings reside alone in God, and proceed spontaneous from the stupendous Ocean of infinite Perfection, the Grant is his immutable Will, *I will be their God*; and the Children's Right is hereditary, in the Person of his Son; *If a Son, then an Heir of God through Christ*. I confess they must be Persons of very little Accuracy, who think that any Thing, 'that Christ did, was to remove an Incumbrance brought by Sin upon that Grant of Grace and Glory in him as a Head.'

Grace and Glory are, and always were, absolutely above all Incumbrance. The Incumbrance, Thralldom, and Misery brought by Sin, came upon the Persons, and not upon the Inheritance. It is true, the earthly Inheritance possessed by Man in a State of Innocency is lost by Sin, and never to be regained; but the heavenly Inheritance, secure in God, never was within the Reach of any Incumbrance by Sin or any other Thing. The Church's Portion and Inheritance is nothing less than the Essence of Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; *I am thy God*. And being the Children of God, they are the Children of the Promise; *Which God that cannot lie promised before the World began*. And have a native and unalienable Right to their Inheritance; *For this God is our God for ever and ever*. Grace and Glory are the Church's Patrimony, and have no Dependence upon any Thing but the Immutability of God; and a legal Title to all the Blessings of eternal Life rests in Christ the First-born, and his Elect, being *Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones*: Their Right of Inheritance is founded in his indubitable Claim, *Whom he hath appointed Heir of all Things*, and who says to his Children, *I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me*.

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The Patrimony and the Purchase are not to be confounded, for they are two distinct Things; the former is the God of his Church, the latter is the Church of God: Not the Inheritance but the Persons were purchased: Transgression involved their Persons in Ruin: Christ (their Inheritance) purchased them to Liberty for himself, and by answering all the Demands of the holy Law in their Stead, obtained for them a legal Title to Pardon, Justification, Peace with God, and Freedom from all the Effects of Sin. And, as the Reward of his Sufferings, the Father promised him the Enjoyment of his Purchase: *He shall see of the Travel of his Soul, and shall be satisfied.—Therefore will I divide him a Portion with the Great, and he shall divide the Spoil with the Strong: because he hath poured out his Soul unto Death.* These, and such like, are the Promises which the Father made to the Son, on Condition of his fulfilling the Covenant Engagements; not Grace and Glory to bestow upon his People, for that is himself, but full Satisfaction in the Enjoyment of his People, who are his Heritage: *The LORD's Portion is his People.* They destroyed themselves, but in him is their Help. Through his Undertakings and Performances, thro' his meritorious Death and Life, through his Blood and Righteousness they have Redemption, Remission of Sins, and eternal Salvation.—*God is the Portion of his Elect for ever:* With whom there never was, is, nor can be any Restraint, Obstruction, or Alienation; neither is it possible that any Thing of the Nature of a Purchase should take Place, or have any Influence into this indefeasible Patrimony. Their indisputable Right is secure in their eternal Union with Christ, and their plenteous Enjoyment proceeds in divine Communications of Life, from *the Fulness of him that filleth all in all.—For it pleased the Father, that in him should all Fulness dwell.* To purchase, procure, acquire, obtain, or any Thing of the like

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Nature,

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Nature, never did, nor ever can bear any Relation to any of the special Blessings of Life, Grace and Glory, or to that essential Felicity which is in God, and is bestowed no other Way than as a free Gift in the personal Perfection of the *Son of his Love*.—*Unto us a Son is given.—God hath given to us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son.*

Therefore, inasmuch as Faith is a spiritual Blessing *given us in Christ*, and communicated to us from himself, *as a Head of Life and Influence*, I conclude, *That it is no Part of his Purchase.* Our Persons and our Redemption from the Curse cost him dear, but his Grace Fulness is essential to himself. Christ in undertaking our Redemption was *made under the Law*, and obnoxious to *the Wrath of God*; and in that Capacity Obedience was his Duty, and Vengeance his Due, and by the Amplitude of his Obedience unto Death, and the Preciousness of the Life which he laid down, he so compleatly fulfilled his Surety Engagements, and gave such Honour to the Law as made *an End of Sins*, and brought in *everlasting Righteousness*. And it is my humble Opinion, That he that has a just Apprehension of the infinite Value of the Righteousness of Christ, will never form any Conceptions of a Righteousness of his own in the Sight of God, in Time or Eternity. But it is to be observed that Obedience to a Law is no other than the Payment of a Debt: And tho' it justly merits the Approbation of the Law-giver, so as the Performer has a Right to stand before him free of all Impeachment, it cannot deserve any real Benefit or proper Reward: Therefore, in my Judgment, it is a Contradiction in Terms to say that 'Obedience to the Law—deserves—Grace.'—But if it should be said, 'That all Acts of Mercy, Deliverance from Misery, Freedom from Condemnation, and Preservation from Danger are Grace, which, as to us, is wholly free, but as it respects Christ our Surety, it

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' is Matter of Debt; therefore it is Grace merited ' by Obedience.' I answer, in a remote or improper Sense these Acts are Grace; but, in a more strict and proper Sense, they are *Acts of Grace*. And tho' our Right to these Priviledges is acquired by the Obedience of Christ, it is not merited Grace; for Grace is the Fountain of that Obedience: It properly is Grace extending and manifesting itself thro' the Merits of Christ in Acts of Mercy to us.—Beside, Acts of Mercy are not the Thing under Consideration, but *special Faith*, which is Grace in a positive Sense, a real spiritual Communication of Life immediately from God.

If it be objected, ' That a Right to Faith was ' obtained by Christ's Death: ' I reply, if no more is ' intended than this, namely, *A Right, by Faith, to receive Remission of Sins*; or, *That the Purchase which Christ made by his Blood, is Matter for the Soul, by Faith, to feed upon*; it is an undeniable Truth: Or if it intends, *That the Soul is thereby redeemed from that Condemnation, which otherwise must have sunk him into eternal Perdition, and rendered him incapable of any spiritual Enjoyment*; this also is indisputable.—But if it intends, *That a Right to the divine Life, as it consists in the Love of God, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, dwelling in the Heart, was obtained for us*; I deny it.—God's Elect, lost by Sin, Christ purchased; and from every Evil in which Sin had involved them, he obtained Deliverance, by a faithful Discharge of his high Office of *Mediator*, and *by the Blood of the everlasting Covenant*. But that vital Grace which is essential to, and proceeds from the Fulness of God, was not in their Possession before the Fall; therefore it never could be lost, and consequently it never was obtained, or purchased; neither was their indelible Title to their God (their Inheritance) ever forfeited or defaced by Sin, for then no Foundation had remained for their

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Recovery ; no more Hope for the Election than the Rest ; they had never heard of a Redeemer !

If it be objected, ‘ That I make no Distinction ‘ between the Grace of God, and God himself.’ I reply, I desire diligently to attend to those Distinctions which the Holy Ghost is pleased to make in the sacred Word, but not to coin Distinctions of my own : I desire to speak of the deep Things of God with Humility and Reverence, and at the same Time to contend earnestly and boldly for that Faith which was once delivered to the Saints. It cannot but be sinful to use Exaggerations, and hyperbolical Phrases, in the Things of God ; or stretch our Imaginations and Expressions beyond the true Intent of the divine Testimony : And on the other Hand, it cannot be justifiable to invent qualifying Expressions in the Truths of God, and out of feigned Modesty to decline the Strength and Glory expressed in the holy Oracles.—I have heard and read the Opinions of some, which, if I understand them right, are to this Purpose, ‘ That that Grace and Truth which the ‘ Saints receive from Christ, is something which is ‘ superior to the human Nature, but inferior to the ‘ divine Nature.’ And whether this be the same Thing which others mean, who say, ‘ That Grace in the ‘ Hearts of the Saints is a new Creature ;’ I leave themselves to determine : Only I observe, If it is a Creature, it is not divine ; if it is distinct from the Man, it is not human. And I freely confess, to me they both appear unintelligible Paradoxes.—I distinguish between the Grace of God, considered in a primary and a secondary Sense. Every Blessing or Favour that we enjoy, as it proceeds from the Goodness of God, may be called Grace, tho’ it is not God ; but the Fountain of Goodness from whence it proceeds is God. Spiritual Dispositions of Mind, because they are produced by divine Grace, are frequently called Grace ; tho’ they are not God : But that
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vital Power that produced those holy Dispositions, is God. As we frequently say of a Piece of Writing, it is such a Man's Hand, when we only mean, it is the Work of his Hand; but that which formed it is his Hand; that is, the Man himself. I have often thought, some Persons do not duly distinguish between the special Communications of Grace, and it's Effects produced in the Soul; which really are specifically different; as much as the Sun-Beams are different to the Fruits of the Earth which are produced thereby: *Truth shall spring out of the Earth, and Righteousness shall look down from Heaven.*—I think it no Arrogancy, or unguarded Flight, to say, *That that spiritual Life which the Saints enjoy by Faith in Christ Jesus, is God himself*; so long as I find such abundant Evidence thereof in his infallible Word: *God hath said, I will dwell in them.*—*God is in you of a Truth.*—*It is God which worketh in you.*—*God dwelleth in us.*—*Christ liveth in me.*—*Which is Christ in you.*—*The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.*—But as I may have Occasion to treat of this particular Branch more large and distinct in another Place, I shall dismiss it for the present.

2. The sovereign Grace of Jehovah could not possibly receive any Advantage from Sin, nor sustain any Loss for Want of it.

It is not consistent with the Perfections of God, that he should be insufficient to execute his own Counsel, without the Intervention of Sin; or that his Grace and Glory could not take Place, without that abominable Thing which his Soul hateth. The Grace of God is sovereign and free, and altogether incapable of Stimulation or Restraint, by any Thing that can proceed from a Creature: So that, whether God's Elect stood or fell, whether they continued in Good, or apostatized to Evil, whether Sin intervened or it did not, it could neither further nor hinder the Effects of the Counsels of the eternal uncreated Mind.

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Mind.—The Grace of God is gloriously illustrated in the Salvation of his People from their Sins; and herein it has shined forth beyond all the Conceptions of Men or Angels. The Love, Wisdom, and Power of God, manifest in extinguishing Evil, and thereby causing Good to shine more conspicuous; by seizing the Opportunity, destroying the Destroyer, and plucking the Brand out of the Fire, &c. will doubtless be the Admiration of the Saints for ever and ever. This is not the Matter in Debate. But, inasmuch as throughout the Scripture, Sin is represented as the Fault of the Creature, the Depravity of his Nature, the Deformity of his Being, and the Destruction of his Happiness, as well as the Object of God's Abhorrence, whereof it is said, *It grieved him at his Heart*.—The Question is this, Whether the Existence of Sin is necessary to the Existence of Grace? Or whether the Most High was under Necessity to have Recourse to this Expedient, to introduce, decree, or make Sin to be unavoidable, in order to manifest the Riches of his Grace?

I am very sensible what Difficulty attends the Undertaking, to distinguish between Grace and Sin: Not because there is any Kindred, or Resemblance between them, or the least Dependance on one another; for there cannot possibly be two such Opposites in the Creation of God. Neither of them are Creatures. The former is essential to God; therefore not a Creature: The latter is the Ruin of the Excellency and Felicity of Creatures, but not itself a Creature. They are so infinitely distant, so unconformably dissimilar, and so irreconcilably opposite, that it is not possible for any Concord to subsist between them. Therefore the Difficulty lies not in pointing out the real Difference between these two unmeasurable Extremes, but in accommodating the Subject to Minds already prepossessed in favour of long imbibed (tho' undigested) Opinions.—For there

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are not a few who retain such Sentiments as these,
 ‘ That Sin was necessary to make Way for Grace ;
 ‘ that the Fall of Man was made unavoidable, by
 ‘ the Decree of God ; that Christ had never come in
 ‘ our Nature, only for the Sake of bearing our Sin ;
 ‘ that there had been no Way to eternal Glory, had
 ‘ not Sin given Occasion ; &c.’ And of the Truth
 of these Sentiments they seem as confident, as if they
 had received them from the Oracles of God : And I
 doubt not but that by long Custom in repeating
 them, their Minds are wrought up into a real Per-
 swasion that they are grounded upon divine Reve-
 lation.

Again, they conceive that if they should let go
 these Sentiments, some great Absurdity will follow,
 which will open a Door to *Arminianism*: Whereas the
 Absurdity lurks in these Sentiments themselves; and
 the Door to *Arminianism* never can be truly shut, so
 long as these undigested Notions are kept open.—
 For how is it possible but an *Arminian* will find a Plea
 against the Doctrines of Grace, while Grace and Sin
 are so unnaturally coupled together, and represented
 in such an unfavoury Light ? It is this ill-concerted
 Scheme, or this monstrous System, drawn in Colours
 so unnatural, that has given the greatest Handle to
Arminians, to malign the precious Doctrines of *Jesus*,
 and prejudice weak Minds against the Truth.—
 From this very Hypothesis, Mr. *Wesley* has taken
 Liberty to draw the most monstrous Conclusions,
 and to reproach the Doctrines of special Grace in a
 most profane and horrible Manner; ever and anon
 crying out, *O horrible Decree*.—And through hearing
 such Notions frequently introduced, and confounded
 with the Doctrines of special Grace, many of the
 weak Lambs of Christ are stumbled, and dare not
 think of lifting their Faces out of the Smoke of *Ar-*
minianism into the glorious Light of free and sovereign
 Grace, for fear of this shocking Appearance: For in
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their Apprehension, it makes God the *Author of Sin*, and the *impulsive Cause* of all the *Misery of his Creatures*. And I confess, that of all the Distinctions, Glosses, Evasions, Subtilties, and logical Turns, which I have seen upon the Subject, To prove *The Necessity of the Intervention of Sin*; and to clear God from being *The real and native Author of it*; I have not yet seen any Thing that removes *the Charge*.

By this very Thing I myself was shut down in the dusky Regions of *Arminian* Inconsistencies, for the Space of ten Years: After I was blessed with the Love of God, Christ was become my Salvation, and I fed upon him as the Bread of Life. But I stayed (as it were) in the first Rudiments of Christianity; *long in the Place of breaking forth of Children*; and could not come forth into the Excellency of the Glory of the everlasting Gospel, for fear of entertaining blasphemous Notions, or receiving Doctrines injurious to the Glory of the God of my Salvation; not having Judgment to distinguish between the Glory of sovereign Grace, as it shines in the unmixed Gospel, and the groundless Opinions of Men, unskilfully annexed thereto. But since it has been the good Pleasure of my heavenly Father to enlighten mine Eyes by his sacred Word, to distinguish between the divine Testimony and human Glosses; and to strengthen my Heart by his Spirit, to shake off those unnatural Shackles; I plainly see the Doctrines of Grace are perfectly harmonious, without the least Jar. Every Thing runs consistent, without any Harshness or Absurdity attending it: *God is Light, and in him is no Darknefs at all*.—Therefore it is not with me a light Matter, but what very sensibly touches my Heart with deep Concern, to think of those tender Lambs of Jesus, who are kept back from feeding in the Richness of the Pastures, through being entangled in the same Fetters as I have been: And however I may be esteemed *A speckled Bird*, for treading out of
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the old beaten Path; I esteem it my Duty to hearken unto God, rather than unto Men.—And, my beloved Brethren, I persuade myself that I am not writing to Persons who conceive of no other Rule whereby to regulate their Judgments in divine Things, beside the Opinions of Men received by Tradition; but to such as have learned to enquire for themselves, and to search the Scriptures, *Whether these Things are so.*

1. It is clear from the Scripture that the Love of God is eternal, for it is essential to himself; *God is Love*: Therefore, if God is eternal, his Love is the same; but Love doth not exist without it's peculiar Object; therefore, the Object of his Love is eternal, and eternally beloved; and this Object is his only begotten Son, EMMANUEL. *Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my Soul delighteth.—This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.—The Father loveth the Son.—Thou lovedst me before the Foundation of the World—Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his Delight, rejoicing always before him.*

2. All God's Elect were eternally foreknown in Christ the First-born, therefore they were Objects of the same eternal Love of the Father: *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the World may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.—The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting Love: therefore with loving Kindness have I drawn thee.—According as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy, and without Blame before him in Love. Having predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good Pleasure of his Will, To the Praise of the Glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.—Rejoicing in the habitable Part of his Earth, and my Delights were with the Sons of Men.*

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3. The everlasting Love of God to his Elect proceeds from his own eternal Bosom, in Christ Jesus the ultimate Delight of his Soul, independent of any other Inducement: *For the Children being not yet born, neither having done any Good or Evil, that the Purpose of God according to Election might stand, not of Works, but of him that calleth.—For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son.—Having made known unto us the Mystery of his Will, according to his good Pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.—Being predestinated according to the Purpose of him who worketh all Things after the Counsel of his own Will.—According to the eternal Purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

4. The Children of God were Heirs of eternal Life from everlasting, and it was insured unto them as firm as it was possible for God to make it, before the World began; secured to his Elect in Christ by the Band of eternal Love, which is God himself; and eternal Life is nothing else but the living God himself, *Who only hath Immortality.—He the Fountain of living Waters.—With thee is the Fountain of Life.—As the Father hath Life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have Life in himself.—The living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father.—God hath given to us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son.—His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal Life.—Christ who is our Life.—Eternal Life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the World began.*

5. Grace was secure to God's Elect from Eternity. Grace is no other Thing than *Love in it's Out-goings*. This is the Difference (if there be a Difference) between Love and Grace: Love is Grace residing in the Fountain, the eternal Bosom: Grace is Love issuing forth to us in Streams of Goodness; whereby we enjoy all rich, spiritual, heavenly, and eternal Blessings. Therefore, Grace is God himself; or it is the Goings forth of the Fulness of God, in Christ,

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from of old, from everlasting. Grace is essential to the Godhead; for, *Where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.* But it is impossible for any Thing but the infinite I AM to be extended beyond the Aboundings of Sin. Every perfect Gift is by Grace, and the Gifts are such as cannot possibly proceed from any but the eternal Father: *Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.—The Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* The Son of God is full of Grace and Truth; but all the Creation of God cannot fill him, for himself fills all Things; therefore the Grace, of which he is full, is JEHOVAH; and the Apostle's common Prayer was, for Grace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ: And this Grace, according to God's own Purpose, was given us in Christ Jesus, before the World began.

6. Eternal Glory was secured to God's Chosen, as firm as the Being of God, before the World was. Eternal Glory is God himself: *The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting Light, and thy God thy Glory.—The City had no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon to shine in it: for the Glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof.—They need no Candle, neither Light of the Sun; for the Lord God giveth them Light.* This Glory is the unalienable Right of God's Elect: *The hidden Wisdom which God ordained before the World unto our Glory.—To sit on my right Hand, and on my left—shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.—Then shall the King say unto them on his right Hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.* And this Preparation is of the sovereign Pleasure and immutable Counsel of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, *Whom he hath appointed Heir of all Things.* In whom all the Elect are adopted Children of God: *And if Children, then Heirs; Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ—that we may be also glorified together.*

7. This eternal Plan of Life, Grace, and Glory in the Bosom of infinite Love, perfect before all Worlds, in the unchanging Counsel of the uncreated Mind, is the Foundation of the grandest Structure of incomprehensible Glory and Perfection that ever was formed in the Wisdom of Jehovah; or at least, that ever did transpire to created Beings, from the unsearchable Depths of his Will. It is nothing less than a Palace for God; an Habitation for the Most High; a Dwelling for the Holy One; there to regale himself with infinite Delight, and display the Effulgence of his Glory, to all Eternity. And in this Building of God, *The Son of his Love, God with us*, is the Foundation, Life, Strength, and Glory of the Whole. *Behold, I lay in Zion for a Foundation, a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious Corner Stone, a sure Foundation.—Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner Stone; in whom all the Building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord: In whom you also are builded together, for an Habitation of God through the Spirit.—Ye also as lively Stones, are built up a spiritual House.—This is the Hill which God desireth to dwell in, yea, the LORD will dwell in it for ever.—For the LORD hath chosen Zion: he hath desired it for his Habitation. This is my Rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it.—And I will glorify the House of my Glory.* The Glory of the Father primarily dwells in his beloved Son: *It pleased the Father, that in him should all Fulness dwell.—In him dwelleth all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily.* And through Christ, *The Head of the Body the Church*, the Glory is communicated to all his Members: *We are Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones.* Thus, Christ and his Church being one Body, one House, are one Habitation for God: *Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?—The Temple of God is holy, which Temple ye are.—Ye are the Temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk*

walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my People.—The Glory and Dignity of this Palace of supreme Holiness is such, that never an Angel in the celestial Regions was thought worthy to become a Stone in the Building, or to attain to any higher Dignity than as Outworks to the royal Mansion. They are superior to Mankind, *Greater in Power and Might* in their original Formation; yet far inferior to the Saints in their Marriage Union to Christ: Nor do they stand at his right Hand, as the Saints stand cloathed in the Royalties of their Husband, nor sit down with him in his Throne, as his Saints shall reign together with the King of Glory; nor bear so much his lively Image as the Saints who are one Body and one Spirit with their living Head. *For verily he took not on him the Nature of Angels; but he took on him the Seed of Abraham.* This is that incomprehensible Mystery which from the Beginning of the World hath been hid in God.—Even the Mystery which hath been hid from Ages, and from Generations, but now is made manifest to his Saints: To whom God would make known what is the Riches of the Glory of this Mystery.—The Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints.

In this grand Design, God is the First and the Last. The original Ground is his Love; the Plan is drawn by his own Wisdom; the Counsel is executed by his own Power; all the Provision is of, and proceeding from himself; the Situation is in his own Bosom; the Perfection is his own Presence; the Edifice is for his own ultimate Delight, and the highest Manifestation of his Glory; the House is a Sanctuary, consecrated to Jehovah, for his eternal Residence: *That God may be all in all.*

Therefore, according to the original Constitution of Things, I see no Reason at all to conceive any Necessity of the Intervention of Sin, in order to accomplish this majestick Purpose; or to imagine a Possibility

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Possibility of it's being in the least affected, through any Thing being done or not done by any Creature in Heaven, Earth, or Hell.—And unless one of these two Things can be proved; ‘ 1. That Sin is ‘ represented in the Word of God, as the Effect of ‘ his determinate Counsel, and presupposed in the ‘ Foundation of his Love; or, 2. That God was ‘ not able to consummate his Designs without it, but ‘ the Nature of the Circumstances made it absolutely ‘ necessary;’ I shall still conclude, That it is impossible to assign a Reason, *Why Grace and Glory might not have taken Place upon God's Elect, according to his everlasting Love in Adoption; supposing Sin (and consequently Salvation from it) had never had a Being.*

The Scripture does not give the least Hint of *Adam's* Fall being appointed of God, but fixes it entirely upon himself in every Place where it is mentioned. God could not create him with an Inclination to Sin: *God made Man upright*, and pronounced him *very good*. And Mr. Brine says, “ It was not “ an Act of the sovereign Will of God to create “ *Adam* holy, the infinite Holiness of his own Nature “ made it necessary to him, and he could not do “ otherwise.” And concerning the Holiness of *Adam's* Nature, he says, “ That, as to it's Conser- “ vation, depended on the free Will of *Adam*.” Now, tho' I do not understand the Difference between God's Will, and his holy Nature; yet, certain I am, it was so that God could not create any Thing unholy; and I am as positive, That the Conservation of that created Holiness depended on *Adam's* free Will.—But how do these Things accord? For if the Love of God to the Persons whom he chose in his Son, was from everlasting; ‘ a Will ‘ in God arising from his sovereign and immense ‘ Goodness, to do them Good, with infinite Delight;’ and if this Will could not be carried into Execution without the Intervention of Sin; and if the Intervention

tion of Sin was left precarious, depending on the Will of a Creature; where was the Certainty of the intended Glory before *Adam* fell?—In my humble Opinion, this Scheme makes Man as much the Instrument of his own eternal Felicity, as the *Arminian* Scheme does, only with this Difference; The *Arminian* supposes it brought in, *by Means of Man's free Will to Good*; this, *by Means of his free Will to Evil*. Which is most eligible, I leave to the Judgment of my Brethren.

And if the Nature of God be Holiness in Perfection, his Will is the same. Whatever is in God, is the God-head. Therefore, since his Nature is so holy that he could not create an unholy Thing, his Will must of Necessity be so holy, that he could not will that holy Creature which he had made to become unholy.—And the Perfection of God's Nature made it necessary to him to make every Thing perfect in it's Kind. *His Work is perfect*. Therefore, as God did not create Man unholy, neither did he create him impotent: He gave him Power sufficient to stand, to keep the Station where God placed him, and to perform every Work that God required of him, otherwise it had been an Imperfection.—It had also been Injustice, if God had required *to reap what he did not sow*; with which, if any shall be so daring as to charge the Lord, he will righteously retort it; *Out of thine own Mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked Servant*. Yet, this very Thing which God despises with such Resentment, had been the Case, if Man had not been endued with Power to persevere in all that God commanded him.—And that Man's Fall did not proceed from any Contrivance of God, or Trap which God had laid, is evident; for he placed him in the Garden, where he had caused to grow *Every Tree that is pleasant to the Sight, and good for Food*, with full License to enjoy them, saying, *Of every Tree of the Garden thou mayest freely eat*; so that Necessity could not be an Excuse.

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And having prohibited one Tree, he pointed it out to him, forbidding him the Use, and forewarning him of the Danger, that he might not be ensnared un-awares: *But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* And when he had eaten of it, Guilt and Shame seized him, being conscious it was his own Fault: *And he said, I heard thy Voice in the Garden: and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.* Here is not the least Appearance of a Decree that he should fall; but the contrary in every Circumstance.

But some assert, ' That the Scripture proves, ' that God decreed the sinful Actions of Men in ' later Times: ' For Proof whereof they produce a Number of Instances; as *Pharaoh* whose Heart God hardened; the *Canaanites*, of whom it is said, *It was of the Lord, to harden their Hearts*; the *lying Spirit* sent to *Ahab's* Prophets, &c. But let these Instances be calmly examined, without a prepossessioned Judgment, and no Proof appears that God either made, or appointed them to be sinful, but that their Sin was so hateful to God, and their Incurribleness therein had so highly provoked him, that he judicially gave them up to Obduracy and Delusion for their own Destruction.—It is also said, *If the Prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a Thing, I the Lord have deceived that Prophet.* But see the Scope of that Passage; there is not the least Appearance of God putting Deceit into his Heart, but that he hideth his Secrets from such wicked Pretenders: *He taketh the Wise in their own Craftiness: and the Counsel of the Froward is carried headlong.*—Again it is said, *Shall there be Evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it?* The Evil here spoken of is not Sin, but the Judgment of God against Sin; and the Words are spoken to shew that the Judgments of God come not by Chance, but are Corrections directed by his Providence.—It

is likewise said, *The Lord hath made all Things for himself: yea, even the Wicked for the Day of Evil.* But let it be remembered, that it cannot consist with the superlative Holiness of God to create a Being wicked, or to infuse Wickedness into any Being; neither to tempt a Creature to Sin: *God cannot be tempted with Evil, neither tempteth he any Man.* Therefore, the true Meaning of the Text is, That God, in his sovereign Wisdom and Power, disposeth all Things so as to serve his own Purposes: Even the Wicked he overrules, so as to become chastening Rods to his People in the Day of Visitation: *O Assyrian, the Rod of mine Anger.—I will send him against an hypocritical Nation.—For lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty Nation.—Surely at the Commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah.* Thus, while wicked Persons are pursuing the Gratification of their vile Inclinations, God gives them Permission, or holds them under Restraint at his own Pleasure, and turns their Counsels and Actions to answer his Designs, though in the End their own Designs are frustrated. *Howbeit, he meaneth not so, neither doth his Heart think so.—And he also shall perish for ever.*—Further it is said, *O House of Israel, cannot I do with you as this Potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the Clay is in the Potter's Hand, so are ye in my Hand, O House of Israel.* This Parable has no Respect to Creation, but to the present State of the *Israelitish* Nation. Nor has it any Respect to making them sinful; for if so, God who is represented by the Potter must be the Author of that Sinfulness, which cannot consist with the Holiness of his Nature; neither does it consist with the plain Intent of the Parable, which was a Reproof of their Ingratitude and Folly in abusing the Favours which God had granted them, in order to their being a rich, flourishing, and honourable Nation; but now having made themselves vile in his Sight, and forfeited all those Blessings by their

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Sins; they were in his Hand to pardon and restore, or to punish, to divest and expose them to the Contempt of all the Nations, just as it should please him; and howsoever he should deal with them, they could not have any Cause of Complaint, forasmuch as they had brought the Evil upon themselves by their own Sins.—And hence the Apostle reasons, That God hath the same sovereign Authority over all the sinful Race of Mankind, out of the same vile depraved Lump to call forth the Vessels of his Pleasure, and make them honourable in Christ Jesus, while he deals with others according to the just Demerit of their Iniquities: *Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay, of the same Lump to make one Vessel unto Honour, and another unto Dishonour.* But let both Passages be maturely weighed, and there will not be found any Appearance of God making them wicked and rebellious, or of his decreeing them so to be, any otherwise than this, That as they had involved themselves in Sin, Wrath, and Misery, God was not under an Obligation to deliver them, but had a just Right, if it was his Pleasure, to leave the *Filthy* to be *filthy* still. And had the Apostle had any View to God's Decree that they should be sinful, it had been very impertinent to use such an Expression as this, *Endured with much Long-suffering.* Therefore the true Design of the Words is this, that God hath a sovereign Right to deal with fallen Creatures, either in *Goodness*, or *Severity*, just according to his Pleasure: *For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God.*

I might take Notice of more Scriptures frequently brought to prove, 'That Sin is, because God wills 'that it shall be,' (to avoid asserting plainly, *That God is the Author of Sin.*) but it is not necessary; since none of them express any such Thing. And if there be any Text in the Bible which, at the first Sight, may appear to admit of a doubtful Construction; there is so much, so often, and so strongly expressed

expressed directly to the Reverse, that it is sufficient to satisfy any Mind that is willing to take God at his Word. And be it observed, that whatever may be spoken of the Providence of God, relating to Persons already in a State of Sin, can have no Tendency to prove, That God appointed them to that Sinfulness.

I shall only mention one Thing more, which is frequently urged with great Confidence, to prove, *That God decreed Sin.* It is said concerning the Crucifixion of our Lord, *Him, being delivered by the determinate Counsel and Foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked Hands have crucified and slain.—For of a Truth, against thy holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the People of Israel were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thine Hand and thy Counsel had determined before to be done.* In these Texts, as well as in other Portions of Scripture, where the Counsel, Purpose, Foreknowledge of God, &c. are noted, they relate to the Accomplishment of God's gracious Designs towards his Elect, and not to the wicked Actions of Men. But it may be said, 'Those gracious Designs could not be accomplished without those sinful Actions; therefore they must equally be determined.' I reply, Without those sinful Actions his gracious Counsels had not been executed by the same Means: But it would be too liberal in us to assert, That God was under a Necessity to do his Work by such Means, or incapable of performing it without them. And his appointing it to be done in that very Way, by those very Persons, is no Proof at all that God decreed their Sin, but of the all-wise Superintendency of his Providence in setting wicked Persons in such Places, and giving them the Opportunity to discover their Wickedness, and still making it subservient to his own gracious Designs; as in the Instance of *Pharaoh*, whom he raised to the Throne of *Egypt* for such a Purpose: *And in very*

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Deed for this Cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my Power. I know some Persons have taken Liberty to assert, That God raised up *Pharaoh* into Being that he should be a wicked Man, that he might answer this End; but as this is to force a Sense upon the Text beyond what is therein expressed, I think, a tender Conscience, upon deliberate Reflexion, will see Reason to retract it. But some will say, ‘The crucifying of Christ was performed by wicked Hands, according to the determinate Counsel of God; which could not be, unless the Persons had been wicked; therefore, not only the over-ruling of their wicked Counsels, but the Wickedness itself must be decreed.’ To whom I reply, *Be not rash with thy Mouth, and let not thine Heart be hasty to utter any Thing before God: for God is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth: therefore let thy Words be few.* God has never told us that he decreed any Creature to be sinful; tho’ he frequently informs us, That he puts his Bridle in the Lips of his Enemies, and turns them about at his Pleasure; and girds those who have not known him, so that (in an indirect Sense) they do his Will, while they think they are doing their own. And however cogent this Argument may look at the first Glance, the Premises will not maintain the Conclusion: For the Crucifixion of Christ had immediate Relation to the Salvation of Sinners, which necessarily supposes them to be considered as in a State of Sin; consequently, in every Counsel and Purpose relating to that Transaction, the Crucifiers were considered (not as upright Creatures, or as Beings not yet brought forth, but) as Persons already involved in Sin: Therefore, those Counsels could not have any Relation to their becoming sinful, but to the inverting of their sinful Measures to answer God’s gracious Purposes.—So I conclude, The Scripture sends forth no such noxious Fumes, as *That God is the Author of Sin*; or, *That Sin is the Effect of God’s Decree*;

Decree ; or to spin it more unevenly fine, That it was God's Decree that Man should sin.

And as for Grace and Glory, they are essential to God ; and if they could not have been the same without the Being of Sin, then Sin also must be essential to God : Or if the grand Counsels of God, relative to his Grace and Glory, could not have been carried into Execution without the Intervention of Sin, then the Vacancy or Absence of Sin, had been an Imperfection ; and if so, either *Imperfection* or *Sin* (of absolute Necessity) must be essential to God.—It is true, without the Intervention of Sin the Lustre of divine Grace had not been manifested in the Work of Salvation as now it is : For, though Grace is the same, and could not vary, being essential to the eternal Jehovah, yet, unless Sin had entered, whereby this Grace was put to the Trial, we had not seen such a shining Proof of its Sovereignty, flowing in the Blood of Jesus, abounding over all the Aboundings of Sin, triumphing over all Enemies, and bringing us the same Way to Glory. But the original grand Design of the *Father of Lights*, in adopting a People *by Jesus Christ to himself*, was his own Delight in them, their eternal Enjoyment of himself, and that the ineffable Glory of his Perfections, through his Son, by the Holy Ghost, might shine upon them, and they dwell therein for ever and ever. Salvation is no more than the Opening of the Way to this Glory, or removing of the Obstructions which Sin has produced ; the former is the eternal Enjoyment of God ; the latter is the stretching forth of his everlasting Arms to bring home his Elect in Honour and Safety. And as it is more than any Man knows, so it is also too bold for any Man to assert, That God could not have brought his Children home, unless Sin had first intercepted them. And it would be equally presumptuous to assert, That the infinite Attributes of divine Perfection, thro' the unmeasurable Duration
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of Eternity, could not have been able to open and fully display the exceeding Riches of his Love and Grace to his Elect, unless the Entrance of Sin had given this Opportunity.

God forbid that I should extenuate the Greatness and Glory of the Salvation which is in Christ Jesus; and lest any should suggest that I have diminutive Conceptions of the infinitely glorious Transactions of Redemption and Salvation, I am glad that I had before published that Pamphlet, intitled *A Mathematical Question, propounded by the Vicegerent of the World, answered by the King of Glory*; where those that please may see my Sentiments on those grand Atchievements.— Since Sin has made such Devastation, brought Wrath and Misery, inevitable Ruin, and final Destruction, and the God of our Lord Jesus Christ hath interposed, in opening to us the Bosom of his Love in the Blood of his beloved Son, in the Word of his Grace, and by the Power of his Holy Spirit, to save to the uttermost, with an everlasting Salvation, that which was lost; I look upon the Riches of Grace, in the Salvation of Sinners, with the most profound Admiration; as the most great, the most amazingly excellent, and transcendently glorious Work that ever was performed by the Hands of the immortal Being; or at least, that ever was made manifest, or ever enter'd the Conception of a Creature. It never can be sufficiently adored and magnified; it will demand our highest Praises to all Eternity. It is the first Thing whereby God manifests his Grace to a Sinner; that strikes the Heart with a Sense of divine Love, and draws the Soul to God. And I am certain it is what my Soul can never forget; but must remember, with the deepest Sense of Gratitude, as long as I have any Being. But if I was perswaded, That my being involved in Sin and Misery was made unavoidable by the Decree of God, I greatly suspect, whether my

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Salvation therefrom would raise in me so deep a Sense of Gratitude, as now it does. But I rejoice to find that there is no Necessity for such unnatural Conceptions.

And it is utterly a Mistake, to assert, That without the Intervention of Sin, regenerating Grace could not have taken Place in the Elect: For, tho' Man in his State of Innocency was possessed of perfect natural Rectitude, he was not possessed of the spiritual Life which the Saints live in Christ; without which it is impossible to enjoy God in that near Relation as he is enjoyed by his Elect. The regenerate Soul is *passed from Death unto Life*; not to the Life of Nature Purity which he had before Sin despoiled him of it, and in which State he was no more capable of entering into the Bosom of the Father, than he is in his sinful State; but he is passed unto that eternal Life which is in Christ, or which is Christ himself; not the old Life restored: *All Things are become new*. Wherefore, Regeneration is something more than the Removal of evil Habits, or the Infusion of good moral Habits; more than a Reformation of Life, or changing the natural Dispositions from Uncleanliness to Purity: These are necessarily included in Regeneration as the Productions, Fruits, or Effects thereof; but they are not the Grace itself. Regeneration is a spiritual Implantation into the Son of God, or it is a vital Union with Christ by Faith, whereby Christ becomes the Life of the Soul. And where there is this spiritual Union with, and mental Dwelling in the Holy One of God, Purity of Heart, and Holiness of Life are inseparable from that Soul. But without this divine ingrafting into Christ by Faith, so as to live in him, and live by him; was a Man as free from Sin as *Adam* was the Moment he was created; and had his Conduct, in all Respects, corresponded with the holy Principles of Nature, and the Precepts of the moral Law, he could not enjoy the felicitous Fruition of God, as he is the Father of
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our Lord Jesus Christ, or the God of all Grace. Therefore, notwithstanding the Washing of Regeneration, or Purification of the Conscience, became necessary thro' the Pollution of Sin, the divine Life in Christ, and the Unction of the Holy Ghost, were equally necessary in their own Nature, with or without *The Intervention of Sin.*

The Sum is this: All the Grace, Glory, and Blessedness which pertains to the Kingdom of God, is God himself; and all the Felicity that is possible to God's Elect, in Time or Eternity, is Jehovah; his Essence is their eternal Inheritance, settled on them as secure as Omnipotence and Immutability can fix it: Nothing but Sin could attempt to interrupt their Enjoyment; and it was not possible for Sin to have any Influence upon the Inheritance, or the irreversible Grant thereof; but it overthrew their Persons in Condemnation, Putrefaction, and Misery; in which Condition it was impossible for them to enjoy the Light of God's Countenance. Salvation is the Fruit of God's Love, the mighty Work of sovereign Grace, the Performance of his invincible Hand, in rescuing his Children from the Jaws of eternal Perdition, defeating all the Efforts of Sin, and setting them as free from all the Malignancy thereof as if Sin had never had an Existence. Thus, *The Foundation of God standeth sure*: It proved impregnable; the abounding of Sin was in vain, for *Grace did much more abound*. So that Sin did neither further nor hinder the divine Counsel, or had the least Influence into the Inheritance of the Saints; only it gave Occasion for a glorious Display of sovereign Grace, in it's Destruction.

But some say, 'Sin must be appointed of God, for otherwise he could have prevented it.' I reply, If God had not given Permission, or left Man to his own Liberty, it could not have been; for nothing can resist his absolute Will: But this is no Argument, *that God appointed Sin.* But they say, 'Nothing can
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‘come to pass but what God has decreed.’ I reply, That Assertion is oftener expressed than proved. But I ask this Question; Is God able to make a Creature indued with such Power, and Freedom of Will, that he may properly act at Liberty; and so far as God shall please to grant him Licence, he may be the Author of his own Actions, without those Actions being fixed unavoidable by a Decree? If he is not able to do this, he is not infinite in Power and Wisdom: And if he is able to do it, then it is meddling with Things unrevealed, to say, It is not so. His Word does not express the contrary; but by his Expostulations with Sinners naturally and fully implies, That so it is. But they say, ‘God foreknew all Things from the Beginning, and his Foreknowledge is founded on his Decree; for he cannot foreknow any Thing but as he has decreed it.’ I reply, God’s Foreknowledge of his Elect in Christ, is his unchanging Love to, and Delight in them; and if they will assert that Sin was foreknown in the same Way, I have no more to say. But if God cannot give Liberty to a Creature to act from his own Will, without making his particular Acts necessary by a Decree; and yet, in his own Prescience, understand what that Creature will do, he must be a finite Being. —God, in foretelling to *Moses* the Sins of his People *Israel*, avouches his Prescience; but denies those Sins to proceed from his Decree, by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, saying, *I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my Mind.*

C H A P. II.

Of the precious Faith of the Saints.

IN treating on this divine Communication of spiritual Grace and vital Power, I propose to keep close to the Thing under Consideration; that is, the Faith peculiar to God's Elect, whereby they become spiritual Members of Christ's mystical Body, and are thereby distinguished from all the rest of the Sons of Men. I know the Word *Faith*, in Scripture, as well as in common Speech, hath divers Acceptations, wherein it may be applied to Men in common, without any special Regard to God's Chosen. Again, when it relates to the Children of God in special, it may be variously understood, according to the Subject under Consideration; for it is not always to be taken in the most extensive Light, but is frequently applied to some particular Branch or Fruit, or some particular Out-going of Faith in the Soul. But I shall neither discuss the different Senses in which the Word is used, nor regard any Objections that may be raised therefrom: My Business being only to attend to the Essence of that Faith which by the Holy Ghost is held forth as the peculiar Privilege of the Members of Christ, and from whence they are denominated *the Children of God*.

This precious Faith is the *Indwelling of God*, the *Life of Christ*, the powerful *Breath of the Holy Ghost* in the Soul; whereby the Soul is spiritually illuminated into the Knowledge, attracted into the Love, quickened into the Life, enlarged into the Grace, strengthened into the Power, transformed into the Likeness, and united into one Spirit with the Son of God: And whereby it enjoys all the spiritual Blessings, Comforts,

forts, and Enjoyments of God in Christ, that it is capable of receiving, or ever shall be possessed of, until this Mortal shall put on Immortality, and Faith shall be succeeded by open Vision. And from hence proceed all the Fruits of Grace, holy Principles, and spiritual Dispositions that adorn the Heaven-born Mind.—If any shall take Advantage from hence, to charge me, ‘ That I speak of Faith in an arrogant Manner ; that I make it to be God, Christ, and ‘ the Holy Ghost.’ I reply, Whatever the Scripture makes it, so I receive it. It is, God in his gracious Inflowings, or in his spiritual Communications. In whatever Sense the Scripture declares that God does dwell, or promises that he shall dwell, or encourages the Saints to pray that he may dwell in their Hearts, his Dwelling is by Faith ; and none of his Children, while in the World, knows any Thing of his dwelling in them any other Way. And whether I make Faith to be any Thing but what the Lord makes it, or represent it in a different Light to what the Holy Ghost has done, I appeal to the Oracles of God.

The Saints have but one spiritual Life, and that Life is Christ: *I am—the Life.—He that eateth me, even he shall live by me.* And it is said, *The Just shall live by Faith.* Therefore, to live by Christ, and to live by Faith, is the same Thing: *I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God.—* God verily dwells in his Saints: *God is in you of a Truth.—Which is Christ in you.* But this dwelling is by Faith: *That Christ may dwell in your Hearts by Faith.* So that to be blessed with Faith, and to enjoy Christ, is the self-same Thing: *Examine yourselves whether ye be in the Faith ; prove your own selves : know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates.—* Regeneration, or the spiritual Generation, or manifestative Sonship of the Elect, is alone of God: *The Father of Lights—Of his*

own Will begat he us with the Word of Truth.—Hath quickened us together with Christ.—So is every one that is born of the Spirit. Yet this Work is ascribed to Faith: Ye are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus.—Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.—Justification is alone of God: It is God that justifieth.—That he might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. And this Justification is in his beloved Son: Being justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ. And this Justification is made ours by Faith: Knowing that a Man is not justified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the Faith of Christ.—Sanctification is ascribed to the Father: To them that are sanctified by God the Father. And it is ascribed to Jesus Christ: Both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one.—To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus. It is also ascribed to the Holy Ghost: Through Sanctification of the Spirit.—Being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. And it is by Faith: That they may receive Forgiveness of Sins, and Inheritance among them which are sanctified by Faith that is in me.—Resurrection from Death in Sin, is ascribed to God: You being dead in your Sins—hath he quickened together with him. Likewise to Christ: And you hath he quickened who were dead in Trespasses and Sins. And to the Holy Ghost: The Spirit is Life, because of Righteousness. Yet it is done by Faith: You are risen with him through the Faith of the Operation of God.—Purification of the Heart is ascribed to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: I will cleanse their Blood that I have not cleansed.—From all your Filthiness, and from all your Idols will I cleanse you.—There shall be a Fountain opened—for Sin and for Uncleaness.—By the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. But it is by Faith that the Operation is performed: Purifying their Hearts by Faith.—Salvation is alone of God, in Christ: I, even

I am the LORD, and beside me there is no Saviour.—Neither is there Salvation in any other : for there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men whereby we must be saved. And it is through Faith : For by Grace are ye saved, through Faith.—God is well pleased in Christ : This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Yet the Holy Ghost saith, Without Faith it is impossible to please him.—Christ alone is the Way to the Father : I am the Way—no Man cometh unto the Father but by me. And this Coming is by Faith : By whom also we have Access by Faith, &c. It is equally ascribed to the Spirit, and to Faith : For through him we both have an Access by one Spirit unto the Father.—In whom we have Boldness and Access with Confidence by the Faith of him. Therefore the Operation of the Holy Ghost in the Heart, and the Faith of Jesus, are one and the same Thing ; or they are absolutely inseparable : We having the same Spirit of Faith.—Christ alone is the Foundation upon which his Church is built : For other Foundation can no Man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.—Upon this Rock I will build my Church. Yet the Saints are built in and upon the Faith : But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your Most Holy Faith.—If ye continue in the Faith grounded and settled.—Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the Faith.—The Christian knows no Hope but Emmanuel : Which is Christ in you, the Hope of Glory.—And Lord Jesus Christ, which is our Hope.—Looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Yet the Holy Ghost saith, Faith is the Substance of Things hoped for.—Omnipotence is ascribed to God alone : I am the Almighty God.—The Lord God omnipotent reigneth. And it is common to the Son and Holy Ghost : All Power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth.—Christ the Power of God.—By his Spirit he hath garnished the Heavens.—The Spirit of God hath made me. And Omnipotence is ascribed to Faith : If ye have Faith as a Grain of Mustard-

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Mustard-Seed, ye shall say unto this Mountain, Remove hence to yonder Place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.—If thou canst believe, all Things are possible to him that believeth.—The standing and walking of the Saints is by the Power of God: This is the true Grace of God wherein ye stand.—I will strengthen them in the LORD, and they shall walk up and down in his Name, saith the LORD.—I will go in the Strength of the Lord God.—Without me ye can do nothing. Yet these Things are done by Faith: By Faith ye stand.—We walk by Faith.—Christ alone is the Conqueror of all Enemies: For he must reign, till he hath put all Enemies under his Feet.—Be of good Cheer, I have overcome the World. But the Victory is gained by Faith: This is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith.—It is the Prerogative of the Father and the Son, to keep the Saints while in this World: Holy Father, keep through thine own Name, those whom thou hast given me.—While I was with them in the World, I kept them in thy Name. And this Preservation is by Faith: Who are kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation.

Now, my Brethren, to your Judgment I appeal. What does this special Faith appear to be, in the Light of the infallible Word? Is it not manifestly held forth to be, Whatever God is in the Soul? That is Love, Life, Wisdom, Power, Holiness, &c. from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, shed abroad in the Heart: Or a living Stream of Grace, from the Bosom of the Father, in the Fulness of Christ, by the Power of the Holy Ghost, flowing into the Soul? Or (to express it in the lowest Terms) can it be any Thing less than this, *viz.* Such an efficacious Manifestation of divine Grace to the Understanding, whereby the intellectual Powers are enabled to trust in the All-sufficiency, the Affections united to the Excellency, and the Will subjected to the Will of Christ; so as the Soul is vitally joined, and becomes one Spirit

Spirit with Jesus: And whereby the Soul enjoys all spiritual Blessings, participates of the Nature and Image of Christ, and lives upon his God: And which being maintained by a constant Supply from the Fountain of Life, is inseparable from it's divine Original, and consequently must be the Life of God in his Children?

If any one shall take the Liberty, either in Derision or in Contention, to ask, 'If I make Faith a Deity? 'If I make it one of the divine Persons in the Trinity? If I make it a fourth Person in the Godhead? &c.' I am not writing to such contentious Cavillers; but to Persons endued with spiritual Knowledge, who are enquiring after Truth in Love and Meekness, and consequently are ready to recede from any Opinion received by Tradition, upon receiving clearer Light from divine Revelation. And such serious Enquirers will easily understand, that I am not going about to impose on them, by making Faith any Thing but what the holy Scripture makes it: They will plainly see, that I have no Design to represent Faith as a proper Being, having a Subsistence in itself, or to be separately considered; that I neither conceive of it as a God, a Creature, or a Person, or as any Thing that can exist, either in God, or in any Creature, considered in a separate or single Capacity, or that can be enjoyed by one Being alone.—Faith is never understood but in a relative Sense, either the Relation itself, or the immediate Effect of the Relation subsisting between two Beings. So, Marriage cannot be enjoyed either by Man or Woman alone; Breath in an Animal cannot be without the Air in conjunction with the respirative Parts of the Body; Nutrition in the Body cannot be without the proper Supply taking Place in the Receptacles of Nature: Separate the Man from the Woman, the Air from the Lungs, the Food from the Stomach; and Marriage, Breath, and Nutrition have no Existence. The like

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like is in all Relations; separate the Relatives, and the Relation is not. Likewise Faith, in every Sense wherein the Word is used, always supposes some Relation, Connexion, Dependence, Veracity, &c. between two Persons, or of one Person in respect to another.—And where the Holy Ghost speaks of the Faith of the Operation of God, it is plain he intends that spiritual Union wherein God possesses the Soul, and the Soul enjoys it's God. Christ is compared to a Vine, or an Olive-tree, and his People to the Branches. The Branch being grafted into the Tree, and the Life of the Tree infused into the Branch; here is a living Union. The Nature, Virtue, and Richness of the Tree lives in the Branch, by perpetual Communication; and the Branch lives in the Tree by inseparable Connexion and perpetual Nourishment: The Life of the Tree is the Life of the Branch. Thus Christ dwells in the Heart by Faith; and the Life which the Soul lives, it lives by the Faith of the Son of God: *I live—Christ liveth in me.*—I can no better express my Sentiments of Faith than thus; It is *The Love of God, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost*, replenishing the Soul, and the Soul living in the Enjoyment thereof.

Objection. 'The great Things ascribed to Faith in
'the Word of God are not wrought by Faith as it
'is an Act of ours, but as an Instrument whereby
'the Work is performed, or as the Way and Man-
'ner of the Operation.'

Reply. The negative Part of the Objection I leave to those Persons who have learned to call Faith *an Act of ours*. And he that calls Faith an Instrument, it may be necessary for him to consider (as I doubt whether he has done) what himself means by an Instrument. Is it a created or an uncreated Instrument? No Work ever was performed by any Instrument unless the Instrument was equal to the Performance;
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for otherwise the Instrument is certain to fail. If the Things ascribed to Faith are within the Power of a Creature, they may be performed by a created Instrument; but if they are beyond the Reach of created Power, then that which he calls an Instrument is the Power of Jehovah. And as to the Works being ascribed to Faith, to express the Way or Manner of the Operation, it is a just Idea; for the Grace of God in the Saints is called *Faith* with Respect to the Form or Mode in which it becomes effectual. At the glorious Appearing of Christ, the Saints shall enjoy him more abundantly than now; but it shall no more be by Faith, but in open Vision. As a Woman may enjoy a Man in his Kindness, Love, and Favour; and this is called *Friendship*: But by and by she enjoys the same Person in a different Way, in a much more near and full Manner; and it is called *Matrimony*. So is all our Enjoyment of God in Time and Eternity; now by Faith, then by Sight.

Objection. 'The true precious Faith is frequently
' to be understood in a lower Sense, and means no
' more than to receive the Gospel of Christ with full
' Credence, to trust in God with firm Confidence, to
' wait for the fulfilling of his Promises with stedfast
' Hope, &c.'

Reply. These Things, with others that might be mentioned, are called Faith, because they are Branches of the living Root. And tho' the Essence of Faith cannot be expressed in the most extensive Light by one of it's Branches; yet while that Branch is of such a Nature as cannot proceed from any Thing short of a divine Original, it fully manifesteth the Nature and Essence of Faith to be divine. Whosoever receiveth the Gospel in Truth, receiveth Christ in the Gospel. Whosoever trusteth in God with his whole Heart, enjoys the sustaining Power of God in him. Whosoever waiteth in Stedfastness of Hope, is blessed with the Holy Spirit. So that if Faith was

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any Thing inferior to what I have called it, the Productions would be impossible. It is common to say *I touch a Man*, when I only touch one Finger; *I pluck Fruit from a Tree*, when it is only from one Bough; *I bathe in the Sea*, when it is only in a small Creek: But will this stand for Proof, That the Man is no more than one Finger, the Tree one Bough, and the Ocean one Creek? Neither does the calling of any spiritual Fruits, or Operations of Grace, by the general Name *Faith*, in the least depreciate the heavenly Original.

Objection. There is no Weakness in God, but we read of being weak, and strong in Faith.

Reply. When the Rays of the Sun have an oblique Reflection, and the Earth is loaded with cold Damps, we often hear Complaints that the Sun is weak, shines very faint, has but little Power, &c. but we do not thence conclude that the heavenly Luminary is deprived of his Influence, or deny that it is the real Sun that shines. So we read of the *Weakness of God*, but we do not thereby understand that God himself is weak; but we learn that his Power and Grace may be manifest in a higher or lower Degree. And according to the Degree that Christ is pleased to dispense of his Fulness, the Soul is weak or strong in Faith; as it is written, *The Lord will give Grace.* And again, *He giveth more Grace.* And hence it is said, *Your Faith groweth exceedingly*; which is according to the Words of the Lord Jesus, *I am come that they might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

Objection. Faith may fail. For Jesus said to Peter, *I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not.*

Reply. God often failed his People *Israel*, at least for a Time, when they expected his Presence to deliver them in Trouble, and he says to them, *Go and cry unto the Gods which ye have chosen.—Let thy Companies deliver thee.* But this is not an Argument against his

his being the true God. Mariners frequently find the Waters fail; and they are often stranded, or detained for Want of Water; yet this is no Argument against the unfathomable Depth of the Sea, or a Proof that those shoal Waters do not belong to the Ocean. So, in some Circumstances, Faith may be said to *fail*, when the Children of God imagine themselves more strong in Faith than what they prove when they come to the Trial; as *Peter*, when he attempted to walk upon the Sea: And all the Disciples when they joined with him in saying to the Lord, *Though I die with thee, yet will I not deny thee*; which required a higher Degree of Faith than they had yet received. So when a Boy attempts to vie with a Man in some Work, his Strength is said to fail; not because there is any Decay in his Strength, but because it is not equal to his present Undertaking. This is often the Case with young Christians; and they often need the Reproof, *O ye of little Faith*, both to convince them of their Mistakes, in not distinguishing between the Strength of natural Affections, and the Strength of Faith; and also for the Want of Attention and diligent Application, in order to be better prepared for such Events as may happen. But there is no Proof in the Scripture that the Life of Faith may fail: What Christ said to *Peter* proves the Reverse: His praying for him made it impossible, because the Father always hears him. And hence we have a solid Foundation to pray always to God, to fulfil all the good Pleasure of his Goodness, and the Work of Faith with Power.

Objection. 'But Faith is frequently expressed as
 ' the Work of the Believer: *Taking the Shield of Faith,*
 ' —*Putting on the Breast-plate of Faith and Love,*
 ' —*Striving together for the Faith of the Gospel.*—*Hold-*
 ' *ing Faith and a good Conscience.*—*Fight the good*
 ' *Fight of Faith.*—*I have kept the Faith, &c.'*

Reply.

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Reply. Expressions of this Kind do not prove, that Faith is of any lower Extraction than sovereign Grace. The Shield of Faith is the chief of the Armour of God, or above all: Therefore it is God himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who is in Scripture so often called a *Shield*. And the Saints experience him to be the Shield of Faith, inasmuch as it is thro' Faith that they behold and enjoy him as their Strength and Tower of Defence; his boundless Grace, Almighty Power, unchanging Love, and faithful Promises, are their Help and their Shield against all the fiery Temptations of Satan. And to take the Shield of Faith, is the same with *looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith*: To run to his Name as to a strong Tower for Safety under all Trials; to fly to him for Refuge in all Dangers; to wrestle with him by Prayer and Supplication; to meditate on his Attributes, his Grace, his Covenant, his Works, &c. Thus taking hold of his Strength to fortify our Minds against all the Power of the Enemy.—To put on the Breast-plate of Faith and Love is the same as to *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*.—*Put on the Armour of Light*.—*Put on the whole Armour of God*. Practically to apply our Minds to Jesus Christ in a vigorous close Attention, that we may obtain a more intimate Acquaintance with him, and may be made more conformable to him; to stand firm in the Profession of Faith in Christ Jesus; to walk steady in Love to all our Christian Brethren; and to persevere in all Holiness of Conversation.—To strive together for the Faith of the Gospel is to be *perfectly joined together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment*, and to keep *the Unity of the Spirit*; with one Consent pressing forward after further Attainments in the Knowledge of Christ, and Stability therein; and to maintain the Purity of the Gospel in Doctrine, Order, Worship, and Holiness of Conversation.—To hold the Faith, to keep the Faith, to fight the good Fight of Faith, &c. is to *earnestly contend*

tend for the Faith, or to stand up boldly for the Truth of the Gospel; to withstand the Adversaries of our precious Faith, and practically to manifest the Integrity of our Hearts in a diligent Walking with God. But these Things do not prove Faith to be the Work of a Believer, any more than my natural Vigour and Activity proves my natural Life to be my own Work. Is it not common, upon some Occasions, to excite Persons in Expressions to this Effect, *Be wise; be strong; be alive, &c?* But does this imply that Wisdom, Power, and Life are their Works? No: It intends no more than to manifest, in a proper Manner, what Blessings God has indued them with. So these Admonitions are only some Branches of the great Commandment; *That we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us Commandment.* Of which I have treated more large, shewing the Nature of those Acts of Faith, and that practical Believing, which are the Duty of the Saints, in *The Faith of God's Elect.*

Objection. 'But allowing that Faith is not the Work of the Believer, but the Work of God; yet as it is a Work, it cannot be God dwelling in the Heart.'

Reply. It is known to all, that an Action and a Substance are quite distinct, and cannot be the same. But this is no Proof that Faith cannot be of the Operation of God in communicating, and yet be the very Life, Love, Light, Power, Grace, and Fulness of God in the Soul: *Faith—is the Gift of God.* It is an Action to give; but the Thing given is a Substance. Faith is the Work of Christ: *Jesus the Author and Finisher.* To begin and finish are Acts performed; but the Thing so begun and finished, is the *Substance of Things not seen.* Faith is the Work of the Spirit; for it cannot be separate from Love, and *The Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts, by the Holy Ghost.* Yet this Love is a real Substance, inherited

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herited by the Soul. So God says, *I will betroth thee unto me for ever.* To betroth is an Act; but he to whom the Saints are betrothed, is the God of all Grace. Thus, to call Faith the Work of God (in some Sense) is a Truth; but it is not a full Representation of the Thing. To give Faith is God's Act; but the Essence of Faith is his Nature, his Grace, his Love, his Fulness; proceeding from himself in a vital Stream, and maintaining spiritual Life in the Soul by perpetual Influx. Therefore, that which is the Life of the Saints, is not a Principle created in them, and subsisting in a separate Capacity, as a Candle lighted in a House; but it is God living in the Soul, by constant Beams of divine Light from his own Bosom; as the Rays of the Sun illuminate a House, inseparable from the Original from whence they proceed. Thus, the spiritual Life, or Life of Faith in the Saints, being inseparable from the Fountain, is in it's Nature, 'Altogether perfect, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, heavenly, and divine.'

Objection. 'Faith, and the divine Blessings received by Faith, are not to be confounded: Faith is the Receiver, and the Grace of God is the Thing received.'

Reply. I know of no Receiver but the Soul; nor of any Thing to be received but the *Fulness of God*, which alternately is called Love, Life, Grace, &c. and which, however diversified in its Operations and Effects, originally is the same Thing: *God dwelleth in him, and he in God.* Concerning the Receiver, Jesus saith of his Disciples, *HE that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.* And to his Disciples, *Receive YE the Holy Ghost.* And concerning the Thing received, he saith to his Father, *That the LOVE wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.* And of the Holy Ghost, *HE dwelleth with you and shall be in you.* And there is no Inconsistency in ascribing this Grace to the *Three that bear Record in Heaven*;

or

or alternately to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; for *these three are one*. All Grace is FROM the Love of the Father, IN the Fulness of of Christ, BY the Power of the Holy Ghost: *All Things that the Father hath, are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine and shall shew it unto you*. Nor is there any Inconsistency in it's being called alternately God, as it is himself revealed in the Soul; *The Love of God*, as it is a Flow of Love from his Bosom, filling the Soul with Love; *Grace*, as it is Goodness freely communicated, filling the Heart with Gratitude; *Light*, as it illuminates the Mind with spiritual Wisdom; *Power*, as it overcomes all Opposition, and sweetly melts down all the Powers of the Soul into humble Submission; *Life*, as the Soul is spiritually made alive, and lives thereby; *Holiness*, as it is such a glorious Display of the Holiness of God, as to change the intellectual Faculties into the same Image; and *Faith*, as it is received upon the infallible Testimony of his faithful Word, and the Heart is enabled to trust him with unshaken Confidence, whereby the Soul is united into one Spirit with Christ: In which union of Spirit the Soul enjoys Communion with the Son, and the Father. But to oblige the Objector, I will suppose this Receiver, which he speaks of; and hope he will not be offended if I ask him, What this Receiver is? Is it an active, or a passive Receiver? Is it some Thing *human*, or some Thing *divine*, some Thing *neuter*, or some Thing *heterogeneal*? If it be human, is it a Principle or an Action? If it be divine, is it a Gift or an Operation? If it be a different Essence, what is it's Nature? And is it in the Soul, prior to the Grace received, or does it come along with the Grace? I have so often heard of this Receiver (as something distinct from the Soul, and from the Grace of God) and have made so many Enquiries concerning it, and to so little Purpose, that unless I can get a more intelligible Information
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than I could ever yet obtain, I shall conclude, it is an *Ignis Fatuus*, ingeſdered in the Wind.

Objection. 'Faith is produced by the Word of God: *Faith cometh by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of God.* And as no Production can poſſibly be of a higher Nature than it's Original, therefore Faith cannot be the Fulneſs of God, becauſe that Word by which it comes is not God.'

Reply. The firſt Part of the Objection I fully approve: For all divine Faith is by the Word of God. Jeſus ſaith, *The Seed is the Word of God.* And praying for his Diſciples, he adds, *For them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their Word.* And again he ſaith, *He that heareth my Word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting Life.* And forasmuch as all Grace is contained in the Word, and all Faith comes thereby; the Goſpel of Chriſt is called, *The Faith.—The Word of Faith, and The Hearing of Faith.* Faith is aſcribed to the Word of God, in it's firſt Commencement, called Regeneration, or being born again: *Being born again—by the Word of God.* And it is aſcribed to the ſame Word, in it's Increate and Duration: *As new-born Babes deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.—By every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of the LORD doth Man live.* And likewise in it's Power and Stability: *Ye are ſtrong, and the Word of God abideth in you.* Nor doth the Scripture hold forth any heavenly Bleſſing or ſpiritual Grace whatſoever, of which it is poſſible for any Soul to partake while in this mortal State, any other Way than by the Word of God. I ſay, the Scripture doth not hold forth any ſuch Thing; for I never pretend to riſe God's ſecret Cabinet: But I aver, If there be any ſpiritual Grace which it is poſſible for any Soul to partake of, any other Way than by the Word of God, it is a profound Secret to all living. For before the Writing of the Scriptures, when God revealed himſelf to the Prophets, it was by

by his Word: It is always said, *He spake*: And in what manner soever the Revelation was given, it is still called, *His Word*. And to this Word the Effects are ascribed: *Thy Word hath quickened me.—Ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you. I commend you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*—And it is certain Faith cometh by hearing the Word: *Hear, and your Soul shall live.—And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed.—Unto you that hear shall more be given.* But hearing is not confined to the preaching of the Word in a publick Audience; for when the Word of God is attended to, and received into the Heart, it may be said to be heard, whether it be by Preaching, Reading, Conference, Meditation, Recollection, or in what Way soever it comes to the Mind. For in whatever Method God has been pleased to reveal his Word, it is called by the general Name of Preaching: *The Scripture—preached before the Gospel unto Abraham.* So in whatever Way the Word is brought to the Understanding, it is called by the general Name of Hearing.—Neither is this Hearing extended to all that hear the Word of God in the outward Sound, or read it in the Letter; but to such whose Ears and Hearts the Lord is pleased to open, and to cause his Word to enter and dwell there.—And I am well assured no Fountain can produce a Stream of a Nature different to itself. Therefore, whatever the Word of God is, Faith is of the same Nature; for Faith is nothing else but the Word of God dwelling in the Heart, filling the intellectual Powers, incorporating with the Faculties of the Soul.

But to assert, That the Word of God is not God, is utterly false: *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* But to this there is a common Reply, which having been received by Tradition, and by often hearing, and often repeat-

ing, is taken for granted by many, as if it were an incontestible Truth: It is this, ‘The essential Word of God, and the written Word of God, are two distinct Things.’ I confess, both this and many other undigested Expressions, by often hearing and reading from those whom I esteemed Persons of superior Abilities, I have before now taken up and used without due Examination; which when I have come more deliberately to scan, I could not find any Foundation for them in the holy Oracles. Why do we not first enquire, whether the Holy Ghost has made any such Distinctions? Is there any Word of God that is not essential? *Every Word of God is pure.* Why is Emmanuel called *The Word of God*? Is it not because he alone reveals the Father’s Will? And is it not that very Mind and Will of God revealed by Christ Jesus, which is committed to us in the Gospel? The Word of God itself, and the Form in which it is committed to us, (whether as it is written with Paper and Ink, or as it is preached by Ministers) are two distinct Things. But the Mind and Will of God as it resides in his Son, and the Mind and Will of God as it is spoken in the Scriptures by the Holy Ghost, is the self-same Thing. Jesus said of the Words which he spake to his Disciples, *The Words that I spake unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life.* And the Disciples acknowledged those very Speeches to be *The Words of eternal Life.* Again he says, *Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my Words shall not pass away.* And again, *The Word which you HEAR, is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.* These are the Things spoken by his Lips, and they are nothing less than the Truth and Faithfulness of his Heart; or they are *God himself*, in the Manifestations of his Grace. The Gospel of Christ is by the Holy Ghost called *The Power of God unto Salvation.—The Word of Life.—The Word of his Grace.—The Wisdom of God.* Consequently, wherever this Word of God is received,

ceived, God himself dwells.—Therefore to have Faith is to have the Truth and Power of the Word of God abiding in us: And to have the Word of God in us, is to have the Riches of the Grace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as it is revealed in his Word, replenishing our Souls.

The Grace of God in himself, the Grace of God revealed in his Word, and the Grace of God manifest in his People, is the self-same Thing under different Considerations. As the Sap and Life of a Tree in the Root, in the Branch, in the Bloom, and in the Fruit, is the very same, only it subsists, operates, and manifests itself in different Modes: So the same Grace which is in the Father shines forth in the Son by the Gospel of the Grace of God, and by the Power of the Holy Ghost becomes efficacious in the Soul, whereby the Soul enjoys the heavenly Blessings, and brings forth Fruit unto God.

But some Persons are shy of acknowledging all spiritual Blessings to be received by the Word of God, lest they should detract from the special Energy of the Holy Ghost: For they retain a Conception in their Minds, that the Word of God, and the Influence of his Holy Spirit are two Things; and so they are indeed, if we form such low Conceptions of the sacred Word as too many do. But if we conceive of it in the Light in which the Holy Ghost gives it, the more Honour we give to the Word of God, and the more we magnify the Grace of the Holy Ghost. For he is the Author of the Revelation: *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God.* It is the Mind of the Spirit, and all his divine Operations are wrought by the Word of his Grace: All his Will is laid open in his Word, and becomes Life to our Souls by his special Influence: As it is observed of *Lydia, Whose Heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the Things which were spoken of Paul.* And of the *Thessalonians, Our Gospel came not unto you in Word only, but also in Power,*

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and in the Holy Ghost. It is according to the Experience of all the Children of God, That every spiritual Blessing, Strength, Comfort, Joy, Peace, Hope, &c. and every spiritual Impression, as Humility, Reverence of God, Patience, Tenderness of Conscience, &c. proceeds from the Power of the Word of God in their Hearts; nor are they ever produced any other Way. Yet it is the Power of the Holy Ghost, making that Word efficacious. As the Fire upon the Altar burnt the Incense, but the Sweetness of the Incense caused the Perfume; the Seraph's Hand carried the live Coal from the Altar, but the Fire in the Coal touched the Prophet's Lips; *Jehu's* Strength drew the Bow, but it was the Arrow he shot that pierced *Jehoram's* Heart: So, all the Operations of Grace are from God the Father, in the Fulness of Christ, and by the Power of the Holy Ghost; but never take Place in any Soul but by the Word of the Gospel.

But though every regenerate Soul in the World might easily judge of these Things; and (could they disentangle themselves from all preconceived Notions, and Ideas formed upon conjectural Speculation) clearly understand how every spiritual Blessing, or divine Impression, that their Souls ever tasted or felt, was and is by the Word of God alone; yet I doubt not (were the Question abruptly to be asked) but that many gracious Souls would be at a Loss to return an Answer, how their own Souls came to the Enjoyment of Life in Christ; partly for want of having their Senses duly exercised in spiritual Things, and partly through the undigested Instructions which they have unwarily taken up from others. For many Persons make a kind of Separation between the Word of God and the Work of the Holy Spirit, whereby many of the weak Lambs of Christ are confounded, and their Minds wander in expectation of some occult imaginary Operation, they know not what.—

I have conversed with many, who talk of something wrought in the Soul by the Spirit of God, without the Word: They call it by various Names; a Principle of Faith, Spiritual Life, Regeneration, &c. and often seem at a Loss what Name to give it; and all the Arguments they use in favour of it are only conjectural: But the two main Points concerning it I could never learn, tho' I have often urged for them; that is, some Account of it from the Scripture: Or some Description how it operates, what Effects it produces, or what the Soul experiences, tastes, or feels from this separate Operation. And until I can obtain a more intelligible Definition of it than I have ever been favoured with, I shall esteem it a *chimerical Fiction*.

The Things of the Kingdom of God are Mysteries, because they are of such a spiritual Nature as the carnal Man understandeth them not; and because they are so exceeding sublime, that the greatest Saint stands astonished, and cries out, *O the Depth! What hath God wrought!* But the Mystery is only in consequence of the inconceivable Greatness, the inaccessible Height, the unfathomable Depth, and unmeasurable Extent of the heavenly Excellencies. For there is nothing pertaining to the Kingdom of God of an occult, unintelligible, or enthusiastical Nature. All those Kind of Mysteries are *diabolical Delusions*: *God is Light, and in him is no Darknes at all.* Therefore whatsoever creeps into the Church of Christ, which cannot bear the Scrutiny of the quick and powerful Word, and according to that Word admit of a clear Demonstration, is the Offspring of Hell; the *Serpent* going upon his *Belly*. For the true Light hath said, *He that followeth me, shall not walk in Darknes.* The spiritual Man does not feed his Imagination with Phantasms; and when he speaks of the Work of Faith, or the Life of Christ in his Soul, he forms no enthusiastical Conceptions, nor endeavours

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to convey any chimerical Ideas to others: *We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.* The Soul who is blessed with Faith does feel and enjoy the Word of God in his Heart; and in the Truth of that Word he enjoys the living God, and he can tell us how he enjoys him: For he feels the Word of God take Place in such a Manner that he receives it as the very Infallibility of God; and he finds such Love, Grace, and Salvation so gloriously and excellently displayed therein, that he approves, embraces, and delights in those divine Truths, with all his intellectual Powers; and receives those Things preached in that Word as the very Life and Satisfaction of his Soul; and his Heart is drunk up therein: This is to have the Word of God dwell in us. And in this Word is held forth the rich Grace of the Three-One, which he necessarily receives in receiving the Word; for he that receives the Word, must receive the Truth contained therein: So that the Heart is filled with the enlarging, comforting, attracting, and establishing Views of the Love, Wisdom, Power, and boundless Grace of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and is enabled to trust in, to live upon, and rejoice in this Grace with all his Powers. Thus God dwells in him, and he dwells in God. The Love of God is shed abroad in his Heart; and all his mental Powers are taken up in, and devoted to God his Life, his Joy, his Hope, his All in All. Thus he can declare in an intelligent Manner, That Christ liveth in him, and that he lives by the Faith of the Son of God.

This spiritual Life is infinitely superior to that which *Adam* was possessed of before his Fall.—This Grace of God in the Saints cannot be a Creature.—This Faith is not an Act.—This heavenly Blessing cannot be a Duty.

1. The Perfection of created Nature bears no Proportion to the Life of Grace.

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The former was a Perfection planted in the Man by Creation; the latter is eternal Life, proceeding from and maintained by the uncreated Perfection of Jesus Christ. The former was created Holiness, dependent on the Will of a Creature to preserve or lose; the latter is the Holiness of Christ communicated thro' a living Union, and maintained by eternal Omnipotence. The former was such a Dignity in Nature, whereby the Man was qualified for conversing with God as the Creator and Source of all natural Blessings; the latter is such a Dignity in Grace whereby the Saint is qualified for conversing with God as the Fountain of Life in the Relation of a Father. The former was a Nature suited to the highest Entertainments of the earthly Paradise, and capable of taking Satisfaction therein; the latter is a Nature capable of conceiving of the sublime Mysteries of God, and enjoying the unspeakable Glories of the celestial Paradise. And this is what I intended, when, with Reference to the Words of *Paul*, I spake of the earthy Man, and the earthy Nature; though I never dreamed of the Mind of Man being made of Dust; nor did I imagine the Apostle had any such Intent: Neither do I conceive that Wisdom is made of Clay; and yet it is said, *This Wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly*. Nor do I believe the Lord Jesus spent his Time in talking of Clay and Dust; yet he said to *Nicodemus*, *If I have told you earthly Things*. In what I said of *Adam* I kept to the Apostle's Phrase in calling him the *earthy Man*, which necessarily supposes an *earthy Nature*. His Words are, *The first Man is of the Earth, earthly*. His Design was to shew the Disparity between him and *The Lord from Heaven*, and my Design in mentioning it was the very same.

But the Word *Earth*, or *earthy*, may be understood in a contracted, or extensive Light. Sometimes it is opposed to the same Things which under other
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Considerations are included in it; as to Stones and Minerals, to Vegetables, to Animals, to the Sea; or it is taken for one Element, exclusive of the rest; or for the whole Globe, and all in it, in Opposition to the celestial Luminaries in the visible Expanse. And yet these taken all together are but *earthly*, or inferior Matter, compared with the more refined, spiritual, ineffable Glories of the Kingdom of Christ, and of God.—And so *Adam's* whole Person and Nature, with all contained therein, and pertaining thereto, was *Earthly*, compared with that Life of Grace and Glory which the Saints receive in Christ; or that Nature which Man received in Creation, was in every Sense and every Degree as far inferior to that spiritual Nature which the Saints receive in Union with Christ, as Earth is inferior to Heaven.

I make no Doubt but that *Adam* had very enlarged and refined Ideas of the Beauties, Glories, and Perfections of the visible Creation, both above and below. For Nature must afford a very delightful Prospect while she stood in the Bloom of her Virgin Beauty, and her Excellency was displayed without a Vail upon her Face, or a Blush upon her Cheeks; which, thro' the Entrance of Sin, is now cover'd with Shame, and hidden under a Vail, so that scarce any of her original Features appear. And this is the Thing that finds Employ for the natural Philosophers unto this Day: To lift up, here and there, a Corner of the Vail, or draw an Edge of the Curtain, that by a scanty Peep thro' the Covering they may have a small Glimpse of the original Beauties of Nature. And in his Contemplations on these Things, I doubt not but that he had very exalted Conceptions of the Author of them, and must clearly conceive of the Invisibleness of the Most High, even his eternal Power and Godhead. And in this Station, he was endued with a Capacity to enjoy and glorify God, being under no Necessity to sin, but by keeping the holy Law of God

God, might have preserved the Holiness of his Nature, and the Felicity of his Situation for ever. But the Height of this Perfection was *natural*, to know and enjoy God as the God of Nature; for he had no higher Revelation, or Means of any higher Discovery of God, therefore it is certain his Nature was not adapted to any higher Communion with God. For to have had a Nature capable of more exalted Enjoyments than what were granted to it, would have been an Imperfection: Therefore, compared with those sublime Manifestations of God, that Union with Christ, and that divine Nature whereof the Saints are Partakers; *Adam's* whole Person, Nature, and all pertaining to him was *Earthy*.

I am not in the least convinced, that I mistook the Meaning of the Apostle, in the Place referred to; or that I misapplied the Text: I know his Scope was to prove, That there is a natural and a spiritual Body; and from the Difference between *Adam* and Christ, and the different Natures of the two Persons, he proves the Difference of the two Bodies. My Scope was to prove, That there is a natural, and a spiritual Holiness, or Conformity to God; and I brought the same Argument to support my Position as the Apostle did to support his; and if the Argument will hold good in the one, it cannot fail in the other: *And so it is written, The first Man Adam was made a living Soul, the last Adam was made a quickning Spirit.*—It was not *Adam's* Body, exclusive of the vivifying Principle, that was called a *living Soul*, nor is it Christ's Body, exclusive of the divine Essence, that is called a *quickenng Spirit*. The Apostle did not reason from the Corporeality, or Incorporeality of the Things, but from their being natural, or spiritual; that as the Persons and their Natures were, so must their Bodies be. It was the two Persons, *Adam* in the Perfection of his Nature, and Jesus Christ in the Perfection of his Nature, concerning whom the

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Words were spoken: *The first Man is of the Earth, earthy; the second Man is the Lord from Heaven. So I leave my Brethren to judge of the Mistake.*

2. The Grace of God in the Hearts of the Saints cannot possibly be a Creature.

That which is God cannot be a Creature; but that which is in the Saints is God: *For it is—the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.—I in them, and thou in me.* That which hath it's Origin in God, proceeds immediately from himself, and hath no Existence separate from the Fountain of Life, cannot be a Creature; but spiritual Life in the Saints is inseparable from the Lord himself: *The Lord is that Spirit.* The Soul lives thro' Union with Christ: *Because I live, ye shall live also.* No Creature can be eternal Life; but the Grace of God in the Saints is eternal Life: *The Water that I shall give him, shall be in him a Well of Water springing up into everlasting Life.—This is Life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* The Grace of God, the spiritual Life, or Life of Faith, is not a Root growing in the Saints, or a Plant planted in them; the Children of God are Plants, whom God the Father hath planted in Christ the true Vine; and in consequence of this Plantation, there is a living Union between the Root and the Branches, and in consequence of this Union, every Branch receives of the Fatness of the Root: *Of his Fulness have we all received, and Grace for Grace.* And hence the Person is called a *new Creature*, from the new Kingdom into which he is translated, the new State in which he now stands, and the new Life which he now lives in Christ. And that it is the Saints that bear the Character of *New Creatures*, the Scripture Phrases are exceeding full and clear.

If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature.—For we are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works.—As many as received him, to them gave he Power

Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name: Which were born, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.—Except a MAN be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.—Except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.—Marvel not that I said unto thee, YE must be born again.—So is every one that is born of the Spirit.—Of his own Will begat he US with the Word of Truth.—And you hath he quickened, who were dead in Trespasses and Sins.—Even when we were dead in Sins hath quickened us together with Christ.—The God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope.—Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin; for his Seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because HE is born of God.—Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.

Thus it plainly appears that the Holy Ghost intends us to understand, That it is the Saints themselves, and not something in them, that is born again, or is a new Creature. And tho' there are some Texts of Scripture which may admit of some Criticism, there are none that plainly express any Thing to be intended but the Children of God, whom he hath translated into the Kingdom of his dear Son.—But it may be said, 'Are there not new Dispositions, spiritual 'Inclinations, and virtuous Habits produced in the 'Soul by the Grace of God?' I answer, Yes: And those Dispositions being the immediate Productions of the Grace of God, may under some Considerations, or in a remote Sense, be called the Grace of God: But they are not the Thing under Consideration; which is the immediate Grace of God, the spiritual Life, or Life of Faith, of which those gracious Dispositions are only Fruits or Effects. Communications of Grace from God, and the Effects thereof in the Soul, are quite distinct: The former give Life to the Soul, the latter are Fruits produced

therein : As the Blessings of the Sun, the Air, and the Dew, which enrich the Earth, are quite distinct from the Herbs and Fruits which are produced in the Earth under their salutary Influence.

Where special Grace, or the Life of Faith is, there certainly will be spiritual Fruits produced. That Soul will abound (at least in some Degree) with Love, Humility, and Thankfulness: There will be Hatred to, godly Sorrow for, and Repentance from Sin; there will be Desires and Endeavours after Purity, in Heart and Life; there will be Delight in searching the Scriptures, and waiting upon God; there will be Tenderness of Conscience, and Watchfulness over the Conversation; there will be Delight in doing, and Chearfulness in suffering the Will of God; there will be a fixed Propensity of Mind to the Enjoyment of God, being made conformable to Christ, and bringing Glory to his Name. These, and such like Dispositions, are inherent in the Soul that is born of God: They are the inseparable Concomitants of a lively Faith; and as they properly are the Fruits of the Spirit, perhaps they may with some Propriety be called, *Faculties of the New Creature*. It may be urged, 'That whatever is a Production from God, is a Creature; and therefore, these Principles or Qualities being a new Production in the Soul, are new Creatures.' But this would be meer Quibbling: For so we might call every Hair upon a Man's Head, a Creature. It is not the Habits of the Mind, to which the Holy Ghost gives the Denomination of New Creatures; but to the Persons who are made new in Christ, and in whom the new Life produces new Habits. And a spiritual Mind must very clearly and experimentally understand the Difference between the Grace of God in a primary and a secondary Sense. The former is the Love, Goodness, Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Righteousness, Peace, and Salvation of God, as it

is revealed in the Gospel of Christ, and applied to their Souls by the Power of the Holy Ghost, and by Faith dwells in them, and they live thereby: It is their Life. The latter is only the Fruit springing therefrom. And they feel and know how the one flows into them, and the other grows up in them.

But some plead against the Operations of Grace being understood, and urge the Words of Christ; *The Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* But this does not intend an Operation of Darkness in the Soul; but a spiritual Work which the carnal Man understandeth not. It is spoken of the Person that is born of the Spirit, and how it appears to others. For to be born is to be brought forth; and he that is brought forth in the Spirit of Light, cannot abide in Darkness. Again, Christ compares the Kingdom of God, *As if a Man should cast Seed into the Ground—and the Seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.* The Husbandman knows not all the Secrets in Nature; to fix the first Period, when the Seed receives vegetative Motion, and when it arrives to such a Degree; or how the secret Operation is performed; but he knows what Seed is cast in, and whereby it receives Nourishment, and what it is that springs up. So, to the Believer there are deep Mysteries in all the Works of Grace; but he certainly knows what Enjoyments he is blessed with: For nothing can be wrought upon, or communicated to the Soul, but what is accommodated to the Understanding. The Soul is the Mind, and (be it in Nature or in Grace) nothing can affect it unless it reach the Understanding. An imperceptible Operation in the Soul, is such an *Ignis Fatuus*, as the Word of God is a Stranger to: *We have received—the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the Things that are freely given to us of God.—But we all*
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with open Face, beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The boundless Grace of God, the unsearchable Riches of Christ, the Fulness of divine Blessings, which is God himself, is revealed with such clear Demonstration, and efficacious Power, that the mental Powers are filled therewith, united thereto, and satisfied therein; the Soul embraces it with such firm Belief that it becomes his Life; he enjoys it as his own Property, in inseparable Connexion with his Soul; and thus he feeds upon the Substance of Things not seen: This is Faith, or spiritual Union with Christ. By Union with Christ, the Soul is constituted a new Creature: The new Creature bringeth forth spiritual Fruit, (not as his Act, but as the Production of the new Nature, or Life of Christ in him; for Fruit is not Action, but Nature:) The Fruit of the Spirit which grows within, is inseparable from an active Mind; or I think it may be said to produce spiritual Motion of the Mind: The spiritual Activity of the Mind will manifest itself actively, in Holiness of Conversation: And to walk in all holy Conversation and Godliness, is the same Thing as to *put on the new Man*; that is to walk, act, and behave becoming our Profession: For it cannot intend, to take, and put upon ourselves some other Person or Creature. But as in common Speech, when a Man behaves according to his Dignity, he is said to put it on; as, he puts on the Gentleman, puts on the Magistrate, puts on the Soldier, &c. So the Believer puts on the Lord Jesus Christ, puts on the new Man, puts on, as the Elect of God, &c. Thus, *Old Things are past away, behold all Things are become new.* Not that all the old Dispositions of the Mind, and Corruptions of Nature have subsided; for they still maintain a Warfare in the Soul: But they are passed away from holding the Reins of Government. And concerning the fixed State of the Soul,

Soul, Righteousness, Peace, Access to God, Hope of eternal Life, &c. all Things are become new.

3. The Faith of God's Elect is not the Act of a Creature.

I do not say, that what many call Faith is not their own Act: For I fear, that with many the Faith which they pretend to is nothing else but an Act of their own. Therefore, if a Person should tell me that his Faith is his own Act, I would not dispute it with him; I should rather take it for granted, that the Thing is really so; for himself is the most competent Judge what Faith he is possessed of, and whether it is any Thing more than his own Act, or not. But if he should pretend, that this Act of his is the same Thing which the Holy Ghost calls, *The Faith of God's Elect*, I should therein see his Mistake; for this would plainly discover, that (either for want of Consideration, or want of Judgment) he does not accommodate his Words to his Ideas; or else, that he is an intire Stranger to the Thing he talks of.

The Question is asked, 'What can Faith be?' I answer, It is not the Matter of our Justification before God, for that is the Blood of Jesus; it is not the Matter of our Acceptance with the Father, for that is the Loveliness which God beholds in his own Son; it is not the open Vision of his eternal Glory, for that is reserved to the second Coming of Christ, when *we shall be like him, and shall see him as he is*; but it is the Glory of the Grace of God *shining in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ*; whereby all the heavenly Blessings relating to Time and Eternity are realized to us. And this Faith does not proceed from the *new Man*, or from the *new Heart*: It proceeds alone from God; and thereby the Person *becomes a new Man, and receives a new Heart*. And it is impossible for a created Being to act this Faith:

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Yet I do not confound *actuating* and *acting* Faith. I say, it is the Believer that *acteth* in the Things of God; but every spiritual Act which he performs, is in consequence of his Soul being *actuated* from the vital Spring, or the Life of Faith. It is the Saint that believes, thinks holily, and wills spiritually; yet these Actings of the Mind are not the living Faith, but the Productions of it; at least, whatsoever is holy in these Thoughts and Volitions, is thro' Faith; for by Faith the Soul is blessed with Love, sustained with Power, and endued with Holiness of Mind.— And, if by *acting Faith* no more is intended than the Actings of the Mind, under it's special Influence, the Thing is easy to understand; only the Word is not well digested, but has a Tendency to convey a wrong Idea to Persons who want Experience or distinguishing Judgment.

I did call Faith an *active Principle*, and yet I deny it to be inherent in the Saints, any otherwise than by perpetual Communication from Christ: As the Life in my Fingers makes them active, yet it does not subsist in them any otherwise than as there is a Union and a perpetual Communication between them and the vital Parts. And in this I did not leave my Meaning obscure: But if my Rectifier has found any Impropriety in my Expressions, he is at Liberty to divert himself with it; I shall not contend about Words. But he needs not think himself under a Temptation, in imagining that I conceive the Life of Faith is not radically in us, but in the eternal Fountain; for however *strange* it be, it is what I hope to abide by, unless I meet with more convincing Arguments to the contrary. But some Persons say, 'Between *acting* Faith, and being *actuated* by Faith, the Distinction is too metaphysical to be understood.' I would ask them, Do you understand whether Water in boyling acts the Fire, or the Fire actuates the Water? Does your Body act your
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Mind, or your Mind actuate your Body? Do the Clouds act the Wind, or the Wind actuate the Clouds? Does the visible Creation act the Power of God, or does the Power of God actuate the Creation? My Meaning is this, The Soul by Nature was dead in Sin, and all the spiritual Activity that it enjoys, is through the vivifying Influence of the Spirit of Jesus, who is the Life of his Children, and they live by the Faith of him: Whatever is produced or performed by Faith, is done by Jehovah himself; for separate from him Faith has no Existence.

Because I declare that I have no Knowledge how to go about to act Faith, it is asked, 'Does he know how to go about to think, or will?' I reply I do: Tho' many Times, *How to perform* that Thought or Volition, in such a Manner as my Soul desires, *I find not*. And I knew how to go about to think, and will, when I was a Stranger to the Faith of the Operation of God, tho' I did not think holily, or will spiritually, even when I imagined I did; and at that Time had I been told *That Faith is Thought*, I should have received it; for in that Light I did receive it, and therefore I thought I acted Faith, when I was dead in Sin.—But now, that the Life which I have lived these thirty-seven Years, I have lived by the Faith of the Son of God; and have experienced the Life, Power, sweet Influence, and strong Consolation thereof; such an unsavory Description of such a heavenly Blessing, comes too late.—Being risen with Christ, through the Faith of the Operation of God.—Justified by Faith.—Sanctified by Faith in Jesus.—Blessed with full Assurance of Faith.—Having Boldness and Access with Confidence by the Faith of Christ Jesus.—Waiting for the Hope of Righteousness by Faith.—And having had my Faith tried with fiery Trials; insomuch that my Flesh and Heart have failed, my Spirit and my Strength have failed, my Wisdom and

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Courage have failed, yea, and my Thoughts have failed me; yet, Faith hath never failed.—And now to be told, *That Faith is Thought!* I confess it is *unaccountable*; especially as coming from one from whom I should have expected a more spiritual Definition; and had I not been a little acquainted with strange Things, I should have thought it *amazingly strange!*

4. The precious Faith of the Saints, is not of the Nature of a Duty.

The Question is not, Whether the Saints are under the strongest of all Obligations to live unto God, to exercise themselves in the Things of his Kingdom with all their Might, and to press after Holiness in all the Faculties of Mind and Body with the utmost Diligence and Perseverance? For this is their indispensable Duty. Neither is this the Enquiry, Whether that which is called Faith, or Believing, in a practical Sense, is the Duty of Christians? For that I discoursed on, and endeavoured to demonstrate, in the Book wherein the Mistakes are pointed out. So that the Question has no Relation to the Strength of the Obligations which Believers are under; or whether they are at Liberty to neglect Obedience to God's Commands, Improvement of his Blessings, Attention to his Instructions, &c. or whether they may indulge themselves in Sloth, and exercise their Minds in Carnality: These Things are foreign to the Enquiry. —But the Question is this, Whether that Faith whereby Christ dwells in the Hearts of his Saints, be of the Nature of a Duty? That is, Whether it be of a Nature so low as can possibly come within the Latitude of created Power and Action; or of a Nature so high as to be absolutely above the Attempts of any Creature, and sacred to God alone?

The Answer plainly appears in the Oracles of God, which exclude the Creature therefrom, by ascribing it alone to the incomprehensible I AM.

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Not of yourselves: it is the Gift of God.—Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith. It is the Production of Omnipotence: *And what is the exceeding Greatness of his Power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty Power.* It begins and terminates in God: *Who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the Dead, and gave him Glory, that your Faith and Hope might be in God.* Therefore, Faith is as remote from the Nature of a Duty as Heaven is from Earth. The Distance between Faith and Duty far exceeds the Distance of the Poles. And it is no more possible that it ever should be a Duty, than that it should be a Man's Duty to create a World; or that it should be his Duty to produce Men out of Stones. It is of a Nature so divine, that it is not possible for God himself to make it the Duty of any Creature, or put it in the Power of any Creature to perform.

Nor is Faith a Principle which the Soul can act, or exercise, any more than it could produce it at first. It would be as good Sense to talk of a Man acting the Light, and exercising the Heat of the Sun: Yet, to talk of a Man exercising himself, or exercising his Senses and his Limbs, under those benign Influences, is very consistent. So, for a Child of God to exercise himself, or exercise his Faculties in spiritual Things, under the divine Communication; this is very intelligible, and properly comes under the Consideration of a Duty.—It is not every Thing that is spoken with an active Sound, that is the Act of the Creature in a proper Sense: To live and breathe are actively expressed, and so is believing; but to live and breathe are not in a proper Sense the Acts of the Man; they are the Nature of the Man, when Life and Breath are given: And it is the Nature of the heaven-born Soul to live in Christ, and breathe in the Spirit; It is his Nature to cleave to God with Delight, as it is the Nature of the impregnated Needle to cleave to the Magnet: It is the Soul that believes, that thinks, desires, delights,

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and enjoys, by Faith; and these may be called Acts of Faith, when they proceed therefrom, or are under the Influence thereof. And so far as we are capable of exerting ourselves in these Acts, it is our Duty; and so far as we do exert ourselves towards God, in Acts mental or corporeal, so far we perform our Duty: But this is not acting or performing Faith; it is performing our Duty in the Sight of God, as he is pleased to actuate our Minds by Faith.—Neither is Faith a Grace put into the Soul, which may lie latent, or dormant, until the Blessed Spirit actuates or stirs it up; for it is the Life and Power of the Spirit of Truth himself, which powerfully and graciously actuates the Mind into spiritual Dispositions and holy Actions, and to attend to those Duties which God requires, with Delight, but is incapable of receiving any Actuation. But if my Friend means no more, by the blessed Spirit stirring up the Grace of Faith, than to stir up the Soul into a lively active Disposition, in waiting upon God, &c. under his gracious Influence, I acknowledge it a precious Truth; for I desire not to contend about Words, but to understand, and be understood.

God forbid that I should ever speak diminutively of the inexpressible Obligations which the Saints are under to their heavenly Father, or countenance Disregard to the Duties incumbent upon them: For whatever is practicable is an indispensable Duty; and whatever relates to Faith, Believing, Love, or any special Grace, or heavenly Blessing, so far, and in whatever Sense it is possible for a Creature to perform, or be active therein, I constantly maintain to be a Duty.—But what I affirm is this; That whatsoever is absolutely beyond the Line of created Beings, peculiar to God alone, and cannot possibly be touched by any Hand, but by Jehovah himself, depending alone on his sovereign Will and almighty Power; this, I say, never was required by any Law: It neither
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is, nor ever was, or ever will be the Duty of any Man. And as the Faith whereby we enjoy eternal Life in Christ, is of so high and heavenly a Nature, I am not afraid to deny that it comes within the Compass of a Duty. I also deny it to be a Work of *Supererogation*; because it is no Work of Man at all: And yet I am bold enough to affirm, that in fact it is *something*; which Jesus Christ in his Word has been pleased to teach me to call *Faith*: And that it is such a *Thing* as never an Angel in Heaven, nor ever a Saint in Glory, dares presume to call *his Performance*. So I leave my Brethren to determine what it is, according as they read in the Word of God, and experience in their own Hearts.

C H A P. III.

Of the Preaching of the Gospel.

THE Work of the Ministry, appointed by Jesus Christ, and given in Commission to all his faithful Messengers, is to preach *Glad Tidings*; freely to publish Grace, Peace, Salvation, and eternal Life alone through his Name; or to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God, and no other Thing.

1. The Commission which the Lord of Glory received from his Father was to preach the Gospel: *The Father which sent me, he gave me a Commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his Commandment is Life everlasting.—The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach Good Tidings, &c.—I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren.—I have preached Righteousness in the great Congregation.—I have declared thy Faithfulness and thy Salvation.* Here we see the Name, Righteousness, and Faithfulness of God, and good Tidings

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Tidings of everlasting Life, are the Things which the Son of God was anointed and commissioned to preach; and in the Performance of this Work, his Glory appears: *How beautiful upon the Mountains are the Feet of him that bringeth Good Tidings!*

2. Jesus gave the same Commission to his Apostles: *And as ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.—Go thou and preach the Kingdom of God.—Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature.—And that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in his Name, among all Nations.—And ye shall be Witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost Part of the Earth.* In these Orders nothing appears but pure Gospel; for that Repentance which accompanies Remission of Sins is an evangelical Blessing, a Gift of special Grace: *Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life.—To give Repentance to Israel, and Forgiveness of Sins.*

Again, the Commission given in the Mountain of Galilee, where Jesus met his Disciples by special Appointment, and where it is probable the five hundred Brethren were present, contains no Direction for preaching any Thing but the pure Gospel: *Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all Things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway even unto the End of the World.* The Doctrine to be taught, must certainly be that into which the Converts were to be baptized, that is, the Name of the sacred Three, which is the very Quintessence of Gospel Marrow: And the Things which afterwards must be taught them to observe, were such as had had the Power of the Gospel for their Foundation; being the Commandments of Christ to his Disciples, and having the Promise of his Presence to encourage them therein; so that Grace is first and last,

3. The Apostles who received this Commission from the Lips of the Prince of Light, understood it to intend the Gospel only: *The Ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God.—Called to be an Apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God.—For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.—To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Heathen.—That I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable Riches of Christ.*

4. The Apostles strictly attended to their Commission, making it their constant Practice to preach the Gospel, and nothing else: *Daily in the Temple, and in every House, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.—Philip went down to the City of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. Saul at Damascus, straightway he preached Christ in the Synagogues, that he is the Son of God. Apollos in Achaia, Mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the Scriptures, That Jesus was Christ. Paul at Rome, Expounded and testified the Kingdom of God, perswading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses, and out of the Prophets, from Morning till Evening.—And, two whole Years in his own hired House—preaching the Kingdom of God, and testifying those Things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ. And he declares to the Corinthians (among whom he had resided a Year and six Months,) I determined not to know any Thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.—And to the Ephesians, among whom he had gone preaching the Kingdom of God for three Years, had kept back nothing that was profitable, nor shunned to declare all the Counsel of God; all that he shewed and taught publickly, and from House to House, and testified to Jews and Greeks, is summed up in this, Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, which is nothing else but the Grace of God exhibited in the Gospel.*

5. It was the Gospel of Christ alone which the Holy Ghost was pleased to bless to the primitive Churches : *While Peter yet spake these Words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word.—When they heard this they were pricked in their Heart.—When they believed Philip, preaching the Things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both Men and Women.—When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal Life, believed. Paul at Thessalonica, Opening and alledging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead: and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ. And some of them believed, &c.—In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your Salvation.—Our Gospel came not unto you in Word only, but also in Power, and in the Holy Ghost.—He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the Apostle, to convince the Galatians of this Truth, and of their Folly in being bewitched from it, thus interrogates them; This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the Works of the Law, or by the bearing of Faith?*

We do not find any Thing to be preached but the pure Gospel of Grace, either in the Commission which Christ received from his Father, or the Commission which he gave to his Apostles; nor do we find that the Apostles understood any Thing else to be contained in their Commission, or that they practised any other Thing in their Ministry; neither do we find that ever the Holy Ghost blessed any other Doctrine to the Calling of Sinners, or to the Edification of Saints. I do not say there is nothing to be mentioned but Christ, Grace, Gospel, Life, Peace, Salvation, &c. for these would be a Set of unmeaning Words, if they were not illustrated by the other Things which are contained in the Scripture. But I say, As the Word of God is now digested into one perfect

perfect System, and every Part, whether it be History, Law, Devotion, Prophecy, &c. is made subservient to Christ, and his glorious Gospel; *The Law was our School-Master, to bring us unto Christ*: And considered in it's true Light and full Intent, the Scripture is a consistent Chain of divine Truths, all conspiring to magnify the Excellency of the Son of God, and the rich Grace given us in him; and consequently those sacred Oracles, and all Things therein contained, under the Sanction of Gospel Grace, unite in one entire Stream of evangelical Blessings, to preach the glad Tidings of Life and Salvation by Jesus Christ. Ministers must needs represent the Holiness, Justice, and Perfection of the Law, as a killing Letter to all that are under it, otherwise they cannot set forth the Perfection of the Righteousness of Christ; they must administer Ordinances to Believers (which is only a different Mode of preaching Christ) for the enlarging of their Souls, and drawing forth of their Minds in the Things of the Kingdom of God; they must teach them to observe all the Commandments of the Lord, to the glorifying of rich Grace, whereby the Righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in them. Thus, the Fulness of Christ is the first and the last; the whole and alone Design of every Thing contained in the ministerial Commission, and every Thing which is to be explained, performed, taught, inforced, or any way touched upon in the Work of the Ministry, is purely appointed in subserviency to the Gospel of Christ: Therefore every individual Thing spoken in the Bible (directly or indirectly) contributes to the Preaching of the Gospel; but it is the Gospel alone that is preached.

Hence I take Assurance to repeat the Words for which I am reprov'd: *Nor is it included in our Commission, to exhort and admonish Sinners, or a promiscuous Audience, to the Performance of Duties; to caution and warn them against sinful Practices; and to teach and*

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instruct them in the Regulation of their Lives, &c. Our Commission is not to preach the Law, but the Gospel.

1. The Ministers of Christ have no Commission to preach the Law.

To preach is to publish, declare, or hold forth some certain Fact; or publickly to represent some Message to the People, upon which some Matter of Consequence depends. As the Enemies of *Judab* charged *Nebemiah*, saying, *Thou hast also appointed Prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a King in Judab.* When it is understood in the Name of God, it is a Publication of his Will to Men; wherein a Plan of Peace is represented between God and his Creatures; which was fully implied in the Commission given to *Jonah*, (and was understood by the *Ninevites*, when they heard his Message;) *Go unto Nineveh that great City, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.* And this is either a Proposal of Conditions, whereby God shall be glorified, and Men made happy; or a Proclamation of free Grace from God, whereby that salutary End shall be answered without Conditions on Man's Part. The former of these has been tried, in the preaching of the Law: *The Man that doth those Things, shall live in them.* But it hath not answered the desired End; for *By the Deeds of the Law there shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight.* Wherefore, the latter is now appointed to be preached in the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ: *That the Righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets.* Wherefore the Law is no more to be preached, or represented as the Subject of our Embassy; yet is always to be retained, as a Witness to that more glorious System of sovereign Grace which now succeeds it.

The Law is to be expounded in it's Holiness and Righteousness, the Intent and Extent of it's Spirituality, it's Authority and Immutability; that the exceeding

ceeding Riches of justifying and purifying Grace may appear in it's native Lustre, and that the Saints may wait for this holy Law to be written in their Hearts, and attend to it as the Rule of their Conversation through their whole Lives: But whether it be the Law, or any other Thing, that may be retained, occasionally introduced, or treated on in our preaching, it is still in subserviency to the main Design, either by way of Introduction, and Illustration of the glorious Doctrine of Grace, or for Proof of it's Efficacy, or the Obligations brought upon us thereby, or the Obedience required in consequence thereof; it all begins, ends, and centers alone in sovereign Grace: For no other Thing whatsoever is represented, as of itself answering any salutary End; only introduced for the magnifying the Grace of God, and to render the Glory of the Gospel of Christ more conspicuous, and used only as necessary Concomitants in preaching the Gospel. Therefore, in a strict Sense the Law is never to be preached, but the Gospel only. But, if by preaching no more is understood, than talking or reasoning upon any Subject as Occasion may require, in that Sense the Gospel cannot possibly be preached, without the Law: But to call it preaching the Law does not convey a just Idea, while it is only treated on with immediate Regard to the Gospel, as it is by every faithful Minister of Christ, whether he treats of it as a Covenant of Works, or as a directing Rule to the Believer.

When our Lord gave that spiritual Explication of the Law upon the Mountain, he was then preaching the Gospel: *When he was set, his Disciples came unto him.* It was to them he addressed himself; to whom he says, *Ye are the Salt of the Earth.—Ye are the Light of the World.* And often repeats to them, *Your Father which is in Heaven.* And upon these Souls, who had received Gospel Grace, he begins with pronouncing evangelical Blessings: And to them, who by Grace

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had the Righteousness of the Law written in their Hearts, he expounded the Letter of the Law in it's spiritual Purity; that the Righteousness of the Law being fulfilled in them, they might walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit. But suppose him speaking to the Multitudes (which in a great Part of the Sermon he could not be) he was only expounding the Law, maintaining the Equity, Justice, and Perpetuity thereof, to convince them of the Imperfection of their Obedience; and to lead them to himself, by whom alone the Law is fulfilled, both for his People and in them: *Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or one Tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled.* And if we attend to the main Scope of the Sermon, from End to End, he was preaching the Gospel, and expounding the Law in subserviency thereto: For himself the Fulfiller of the Law, the Grace of his heavenly Father, the Kingdom of God, Blessings of Gospel Grace, and Instructions peculiar to the Saints, run through the whole.

And when the Apostle *Paul* explains the Nature, and asserts the Authority of the Law, as a Covenant of Works, with it's Curse and Condemnation to all the Breakers thereof, he was truly preaching the Gospel; shewing the Insufficiency of all Obedience to the Law, for Justification; and the absolute Necessity of Gospel Grace, to save the Sinner: So that this was not preaching the Law, but the Righteousness of Christ. And when he urged the Necessity of Believers being under the Law to Christ, and discoursed of the various Duties which are incumbent on the Saints, and exhorted them to the Practice of those Duties, (I am asked, therefore I answer) This was not preaching the Law, but preaching the Gospel, and establishing the Law: Forasmuch as it is
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the Law in the Hand of the Mediator, by Grace become a *perfect Law of Liberty*; and all the Motives to Obedience are evangelical: *For the Love of Christ constraineth us.—I delight in the Law of God, after the inner Man.—Neither count I my Life dear unto me.—For this is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous.—Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.* Thus every Precept of the Law is taken under the Sanction of Gospel Grace: Therefore the Gospel includes all that is to be taught by Ministers, and all that is to be learned and practised by Christians: Christ is Alpha and Omega; and Grace is the Cry to every Stone in the Building.

2. Admonitions to the World in general, or to Mankind considered in a State of Nature and Sin, to leave their Sins, reform their Lives, and practise Goodness, are not any Part of the Work of a Minister of the Gospel, nor included in his Commission.

All the Commands, Promises, and Threatnings contained in the Law, and all the Admonitions, Exhortations, and Perswasions used by the Preachers thereof, have been found utterly ineffectual to turn one Sinner to God, to cleanse the Conscience from one Pollution, or produce a Spark of real Holiness in the Heart. This Work has been fully demonstrated to be *What the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the Flesh.* But in the preaching of the Gospel all the human Species are consider'd as they really are, dead in Sin, shut up in Hardness and Blindness, beyond the Reach of any Influence but what is absolutely divine. And the Gospel is sent as a sovereign Remedy: *For it is the Power of God unto Salvation.* Therefore, the Ministers of Christ are not sent on such a fruitless Message, to call upon corrupt Trees to bring forth good Fruit, to admonish Thorns to bear Grapes, or exhort Thistles to produce Figs. The Gospel is an intire Stranger to
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any such empty Inconsistencies, to call upon carnal Creatures to perform spiritual Acts.

And as for such Acts of moral Virtue, or Performances in Religion, as a natural Man is capable of attaining to; these are only the Productions of a *carnal Mind*, and consequently must be utterly foreign to that Word of Grace which is *Spirit and Life*. And as the Holy Ghost assures us, *The carnal Mind is Enmity against God*; therefore it can have no Affinity to the Gospel of Peace; nor produce any Fruit in Conjunction with the Word of *Reconciliation*. The Gospel is a Declaration of the Glad Tidings of the Kingdom of God, wherein all Things are made new, and no old Thing can possibly remain: But the highest Attainment of a natural Man, or the greatest Improvement that he can possibly be brought to by any Commands, Promises, Threatnings, or Persuasions of any Kind whatsoever, cannot ascend one Step higher than to mend the old, nor to that in reality; for whatever Appearances it may have before Men, it is impossible for the carnal Mind in a natural Man, by any of his own Endeavours and Improvements, to become a Whit better in the Sight of God: *For it is not subject to the Law of God; neither indeed can be*. Therefore, it is incompatible with the glorious Message of Gospel Grace, and with the Commission given to the Ministers thereof for them to spend their Time in teaching Sinners to mend old Things, when they know it is impossible for them to be mended; and were it possible for any Thing to be mended, it would still be impossible for any mended Thing to enter that Kingdom which they preach: *He that sat upon the Throne, said, Behold, I make all Things new*.

The Commission is, *Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature*. The Gospel is, *The unsearchable Riches of Christ*. Sovereign Grace, plenteous Redemption, ample Salvation, and everlasting

lasting Life in the Son of God; which being preached in Demonstration of the Spirit, and accompanied with the Power of God to the Heart, communicates new Life to the dead Soul, according as it is metaphorically represented in the Vision of the dry Bones; where the whole House of *Israel*, after all the legal Messages, Warnings, and Instructions sent to them from God, continued insensible, without Life and Motion, and utterly destitute of all spiritual Blessings: *In the open Valley, and lo, they were dry.* But the Message which God now sent must be effectual. Therefore it did not consist in Cautions, Exhortations, and Admonitions; but in a Pronunciation of sovereign Blessings from the Fountain of Life, spoken with divine Authority from Heaven: *Prophecy UPON these Bones.* The Prophet, who was a Type of Christ, first pronounces the almighty Word, or powerful Benediction: *O ye dry Bones, hear the Word of the LORD.* Being in Substance the very same as Jesus himself spake, *The dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.* And this Word of the LORD, was a full, free, and pure Declaration of the good Pleasure of God towards them, and of the good Things which he would do unto them. In the Vision, and in the Explanation thereof, no other Language is spoken but sovereign Grace: *Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these Bones, Behold, I will cause Breath to enter into you, and ye shall live, &c.* — *Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, O my People, I will open your Graves, &c.* which is the very Language of the Gospel of Christ: *You hath he quickned who were dead in Trespasses and Sins.—You being dead in your Sins—hath he quickned together with him.* All the Sons and Daughters of Men are by Nature dead in Sin, *being alienated from the Life of God.* And it is not possible they should be made alive unto God any other Way than by a Communication of Life from Christ: *This is the true God and eternal Life.* And
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he has not appointed any other Way of Conveyance whereby Life may be received from his Fulness, but by the Gospel, *the Word of Life*, by which Word, under the Influence of the Holy Ghost, God reveals his Son in the Hearts of his Elect: *This is Life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*

But there is a common Objection, which I have often heard, to this Purpose; ‘The glad Tidings of Gospel Grace will not give Life to dead Sinners, unless it be attended with the Energy of the Holy Ghost; and Exhortations, Admonitions, and Exhortations to come, &c. may answer the same End, if attended with the same Power.’

I reply, This Objection is a flat Contradiction to the Word of God. For notwithstanding the Holy Ghost is pleased to bless Exhortations, and Admonitions, and to make them of excellent Use in their proper Place, yet not for conveying Life to the Soul, for they properly pertain to the Law; and the Holy Ghost saith, *If there had been a Law given which could have given Life, verily Righteousness should have been by the Law.* God cannot deny himself, nor be guilty of Contradictions; therefore he cannot produce an evangelical Operation by giving Energy to legal Means. The more Energy is given to any Thing, the more effectually it will operate according to its own Nature. Power given to Frost will not cause it to burn; and Force added to Fire will not cause it to freeze; nor will the greatest Strength cause the Edge of a Sword to heal a Wound. If God is pleased to give Energy to his Law in the Heart of a Sinner, it will operate as a killing Letter to wound the Conscience, and rend the Soul to Pieces. And if he is pleased to give Energy to the Word of his Grace, it is Life from the Dead. And this is so familiar and experimental to all that have passed the new Birth, that it is impossible there should be one Believer

liever under Heaven that does not know it in his own Experience. Therefore when I hear Persons talk such incoherent Stuff, I know assuredly that they are either utter Strangers to the Power of the Grace of God themselves, or else their Minds have been intatuated by some vain Conversation received by Tradition; so that they inconsiderately express the undigested Sentiments of other Men, rather than the Result of a mature Deliberation, in comparing what the Lord hath wrought in their Souls with what he hath spoken in his Word.

But let us come to real Matter of Fact: For a just Conception of the Nature of the Gospel, and of the true Design of the Preaching thereof, cannot fail to form our Conceptions right, with Respect to what is, or what is not, included in the ministerial Commission. To preach the Gospel of Christ is the same Thing as to preach the Kingdom of God; and the Intent thereof is to bring Sinners out of the Kingdom of Darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son; and to edify and establish Saints in all Things pertaining to that Kingdom. The Power and the Success is of God; but the appointed Means is the Preaching of the Gospel: Therefore whatever Means is in the Minister's Power to use, which has a natural Tendency towards drawing Souls from Satan unto Christ, or towards the Edification of the Saints, so as God may be glorified, or in any Way to promote the Kingdom of God in Truth; such Means must of Necessity be included in the Commission: And in Consequence, in whatever Light Admonitions to Repentance, and Exhortations to Duty, &c. may really tend to any such salutary End, they must be the Minister's indispensable Duty.

Admonitions and Exhortations, in their proper Place, and justly adapted, have their special Use; but in the Way that many Preachers apply them, they tend directly to invert the Purity of the Gospel

of God. When they jumble them in such a confused Manner, that the Hearer cannot tell what the Preacher intends by them; nor even guess whether he has any determinate Meaning himself; or whether he intends to direct them to Saints or Sinners; or whether he calls upon them to keep the Law in it's Perfection, or only to make use of all the Power they have, to imitate it as far as they can; or whether he calls upon them to work spiritual Grace in their own Hearts, or only to make use of the Power and Opportunities they have, in the use of all Means waiting upon God for the Blessing: And I have observed many of those Preachers, when conversing on these Points, that they shift from Thing to Thing, so that it is difficult to find out where they intend to fix. And I have often been told, 'That if Persons are 'not to be called upon to perform Impossibilities, 'we must use no Exhortations at all, because neither 'Sinners nor Saints are able to perform any Thing 'of themselves.' But this is idle Talk; for we never suppose a Creature to do any Thing independent of the sustaining Power of God; and yet there is a specifical Difference between those Works which are proper to a Creature to perform in that Strength or Capacity which God has given; and those Works which are peculiar to God himself: And also between the Nature of those Things which a natural Man is able to perform, and those which a Believer may perform under divine Influence. The Ministers of the Gospel have no Commission to call upon any Man to perform Impossibilities; for this is directly the Reverse of Gospel Grace, or of preaching glad Tidings of Liberty. Nor have they any Commission to preach eternal Salvation, in Connexion with any Thing which is in the Power of Man to perform; for this is to make it of Works, and not of Grace: And unless due Distinctions be retained respecting these Things, the Trumpet will give an uncertain Sound. If

If we see our fellow Creatures pursuing a Course of Sin, and have a proper Occasion or Opportunity put into our Hands (as *Lot* with the Men of *Sodom*, *Daniel* with *Nebuchadnezzar*, &c.) it is our Duty to reprove, and admonish to Reformation; shewing the Hainousness of such Crimes, and the Misery that is likely to ensue upon such Practices: But this is no more than that friendly Part, which is the Duty of every Christian, as well as Ministers; and therefore is not a Part of the ministerial Commission, inasmuch as an external Reformation has no immediate Relation to the Kingdom of God. And if we should suggest, That an outward Reformation from notorious Sins, lays any Foundation for eternal Life; we should then seduce them into a more damnable Error than that we admonish them to forsake. So that it cannot be our Duty to spend our Time in these kind of Exhortations under any Pretext whatsoever, to the Neglect of the great Embassy which Christ hath given us in Commission.—If we set forth the Law of God in it's Commands and Threatnings, and call upon Men to fulfil it; this is to preach the Law, and postpone the Gospel: And to the Soul, whose Eyes are not open to see the Law in it's Spirituality, it naturally tends to establish his own Righteousness, by encouraging him to imagine it is in his Power to perform it; and if he is told that it is utterly out of his Power, and yet hears it laid upon him as a Task, and himself called to fulfil it; this naturally tends to confound his Understanding, and harden his Heart. And if the Soul is sensible how perfect, holy, and righteous the Law of God is, this kind of Preaching is sufficient to sink him in utter Despair.—If we call upon Persons to repent, believe, and come to Christ, in such an undigested Way, as to convey to them an Idea that they are called to perform those Works in themselves which are inseparable from Salvation; or to cause them to conceive of these Things, as Con-

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ditions of Salvation to be performed by them; this is to preach Man's free Will, and postpone the Work of the Holy Ghost: And to the Soul, whose Eyes are not open to see the excellent Greatness of spiritual Grace, it naturally tends to settle him in his carnal Conceptions, to imagine the special Work of God to be only some human Performance, and consequently that himself may do it, and receive the Glory: And if he is told that it is of too high a Nature for himself to perform, and yet hears himself called upon to do it; this naturally tends to alienate his Mind, and cause him to look upon the Gospel as a Chain of Inconsistencies: And if the Soul is sensible of the Carnality, Blindness, and Hardness of his own Heart, and the Extent of his Alienation from God; such Preaching is sufficient to drive him to Distraction; for knowing how impossible it is for him to work these Things in himself, it naturally tends to deprive him of all Hope.

But as Ministers are sent as the Ambassadors of Christ, to declare the royal Proclamation of the King of Glory; it must necessarily belong to the Execution of their Commission, to use all proper Measures to attract Attention to the Message they are sent to deliver.—1. They are to assert the divine Majesty and excellent Glory of their sovereign Lord: Which Manifestation is attended with Authority, and is an immediate Call to all Mankind wherever the Gospel comes, to pay divine Adoration to his Name. For where the true God is revealed in Christ, there is an indispensable Obligation upon Men to forsake all Idolatry, and all false Worship taught by Men, and to attend diligently to that Revelation which God is pleased to make of himself. And hence *Paul* declared to the *Athenians*, *God—now commandeth all Men every where to repent*: And shewed the Things which they were to repent from; Idolatry, Superstition, and ignorant Worship; and what they were to repent unto;

unto; *That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him.* And to the same Effect he spake to the People at *Lystra*, *That ye should turn from these Vanities unto the living God:* That is, to attend to his Word, and hearken to the Record given in the Gospel.—2. They have Authority to call upon Men to hearken to the divine Declaration: *Be this known unto you, and hearken to my Words.—Ye Men of Israel, hear these Words.—Men, Brethren, and Fathers, hearken.—Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give Audience.*—3. They have Authority to call upon Men to repent, and be converted from those Practices whereby they have hardened themselves against the heavenly Message; as *Peter* did to the *Jews*, who had *denied the Holy One, and the Just—and killed the Prince of Life.* And so *Paul* declared that he did, at *Damascus*, at *Jerusalem*, in *Judea*, and to the *Gentiles*, shewing, *That they should repent and turn to God, and do Works meet for Repentance.* The *Jews* contradicted, and blasphemed, and the *Gentiles* mocked, and rejected the Word of the Gospel; which Sins he shewed that they ought to repent from; and that it was their Duty to turn to God, by a serious Attention to that Word of Salvation which God had sent unto them; and that they should do Works meet for Repentance, by casting off all those Vanities which they had followed, and hearkening to the Revelation of infallible Truth; as the *Ephesians* did, when they confessed their Deeds, and burned their Books; and the *Bereans*, when they daily searched the Scriptures.—But in all these Admonitions we may observe, that they respected such Sins as the Admonishers were witnesses to, and could distinctly point out; that they called for practical Repentance, such as the People were capable of performing; that the Design was only to bring them to a submissive Adherence to the preaching of the Gospel. And in all the Ministry of the Apostles, we do
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not find any such Thing as a promiscuous calling upon Men to a general Repentance, Reformation, and to live religious Lives, &c. It never was the Design of the Gospel, meerly to change Men's Manners; but that by the Power of special Grace they should be translated into the Kingdom of God, and thence begin their whole Lives anew.—The Work of a Minister of the Gospel is like that of a recruiting Officer, who has no Directions to reform the People in the Streets, but to draw the Attention of all, to hear the Proclamation which he is commanded to make in his Majesty's Name; and when any one is encouraged freely to enter, then he instructs him into all Things pertaining to the military Life: So, in the Church of God, where Souls profess Subjection to King Jesus, it is the proper Work of Ministers to teach them all the Commandments of Christ; and they have Authority to warn the Unruly, to reprove, exhort, and admonish, as Occasion shall require; and herein the Apostles of Christ have manifested their Faithfulness, both towards Societies and Individuals. And even with those that sinned, they continued using all proper Means to reclaim and restore them, so long as they did not appear incorrigible in their Iniquity: As *Peter*, when he was convinced that *Simon* the Sorcerer was in the Gall of Bitterness and Bond of Iniquity; yet as he had professed to believe in Jesus, and was baptized in his Name, he was a Subject of the Apostle's Care; and he did not treat him as a common Sinner, but admonished him as a Brother.

But the common Objection is, 'That to call upon Men in general to leave their Sins, to admonish the whole World to reform their Lives and practise Piety and Religion, was a great Part of the Work both of the Prophets and Apostles.'

To which I reply, That to read the Scriptures carelessly, and assert Things unadvisedly, is the Work of too many. The Bible does not furnish us with
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one Instance of any such Thing in one of the Servants of God in any Age, unless there was some special Occasion, or particular Reason more than a general Address to the World. *Jonah* sent with a special Commission to a particular City of the *Gentiles*, is no Instance of such a promiscuous Call to a religious Life; nor had his Message any Relation to the spiritual Kingdom of God, but to the Destruction or Preservation of the City. The Warnings and Admonitions sent by the Prophets to the House of *Israel*, were under immediate Direction from God, and had respect to such particular Sins as that People were guilty of at that present Time: And however wicked that People might be, they were the visible Church of God, and considered in that Capacity, in all the Messages which God sent to them. And under that legal Dispensation, the Promises and Threats annexed to those Admonitions related not to eternal Life, but to the Tranquillity of *Israel*, as a Nation: Therefore here is no President to Ministers of the Gospel, to exhort the whole World. *John* the Baptist, the Lord *Jesus* himself, and his Disciples, *preached that Men should repent*. But it was not the *Gentiles*, nor the *Samaritans*; but it was *To the lost Sheep of the House of Israel*, who were still considered as God's Church, until the Death of Christ. And the Repentance called for, was not the groveling Notion of leaving some gross Immoralities, to betake themselves to a religious Life: But to abandon the false Foundations which they had built to themselves, of having *Abraham to their Father*, and *trusting in themselves that they were righteous*; and that they should attend to the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. —But we often hear of the Parable of the *Great Supper*, where the Servant received this Commission, *Compel them to come in*. And hence they argue, 'That Ministers are to compel Sinners, by urging, 'persuading, &c.' But as this discovers the Ob-
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jector's Unskilfulness in the Word of Righteousness, to dream of Sinners being brought into the Kingdom of God, by Urgings and Persuasions; so it discovers his Inattention to this Parable; where it is easy to observe, that there was no Servant sent but one; and this Servant knew all the Seats, and for whom they were prepared: *Yet there is Room.* So that the Thing intended is, *The Father's Commission to Christ.*

I know, that for Ministers to exhort, persuade, and call upon Persons in a general Way, to mend their Lives, practise Virtue, be religious, live godly, &c. is the most pleasing Method of Preaching, to Persons who have a natural Inclination to Religion, affecting the Form without the Power: Provided that they be not touched too close; for they cannot bear the Probe. They are not displeased to be called upon, and told what they ought to do, and how they ought to live; but they cannot bear the searching Word, to distinguish between Flesh and Spirit, for their carnal Life is yet whole in them. And I am well assured, that it is a very easy Matter with many Persons to be stimulated into a religious Zeal, voluntary Humility, external Devotion, and reformed to a strict Reservedness in their Behaviour; thro' a fond Conceit of being saved, pleasing God, obtaining Heaven, human Applause, &c. And yet be no more than stony-ground Hearers, carrying Lamps without Oil, or Plants which the heavenly Father hath not planted. But this only proves the Depth of the Deceitfulness of Sin; for such must needs be the more prepared for the unclean Spirit to inhabit in a different Form. And it does not give me any better Opinion of the human Nature, or to conceive any less of it's Depravity and Corruption; no more than the Art of the Serpent gives me a better Opinion of him, while I observe into how many different Postures he will turn himself, but still retains his poisonous Nature.

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And this is the very Thing which I insist on, That Sin lies so deep in our Nature, that nothing short of sovereign Grace can change it, or bring us the least Step nearer to God. The *Ethiopian* may change his Garments, and the Leopard his Position; but the Skin and the Spots remain. So does the Pollution of Nature, whatever Change may be wrought in appearance by moral Suasion. But where the pure Gospel of Christ enters the Heart, in Spirit and Power, the Soul is by Faith united to God's Holy One; and this vital Union with Christ cannot fail to produce Righteousness and true Holiness, both in Heart and Life.—A Hypocrite, a formal Professor, or one that is carnally religious, may be an *Antinomian* in the worst Sense of the Word; making a vain Pretence to the Righteousness of Christ, and despising the Holiness of God's Law; which in my Judgment deserves no better a Name than *A Devil incarnate*. But it is not possible that a real Believer in Jesus should be such; *because he is born of God, and is a new Creature*; which new Man after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness, therefore the Law of his God is in his Heart. For this Motto remains upon all the Saints, engraven with the Finger of God, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD.

These Things, holy Brethren, I leave you to try by the Word of God; and may the Holy Ghost guide you into all Truth. *Amen.*

And this is the very Thing which I will do. That
 sinners to keep in our Nature, that nothing there of
 Sovereign Grace can change it, or bring us the least
 step nearer to God. I am not a Lawyer, who may change his
 Arguments, and the Lord is his Portion; but the
 Holy Spirit and the Scriptures remain. He does the Pollution

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